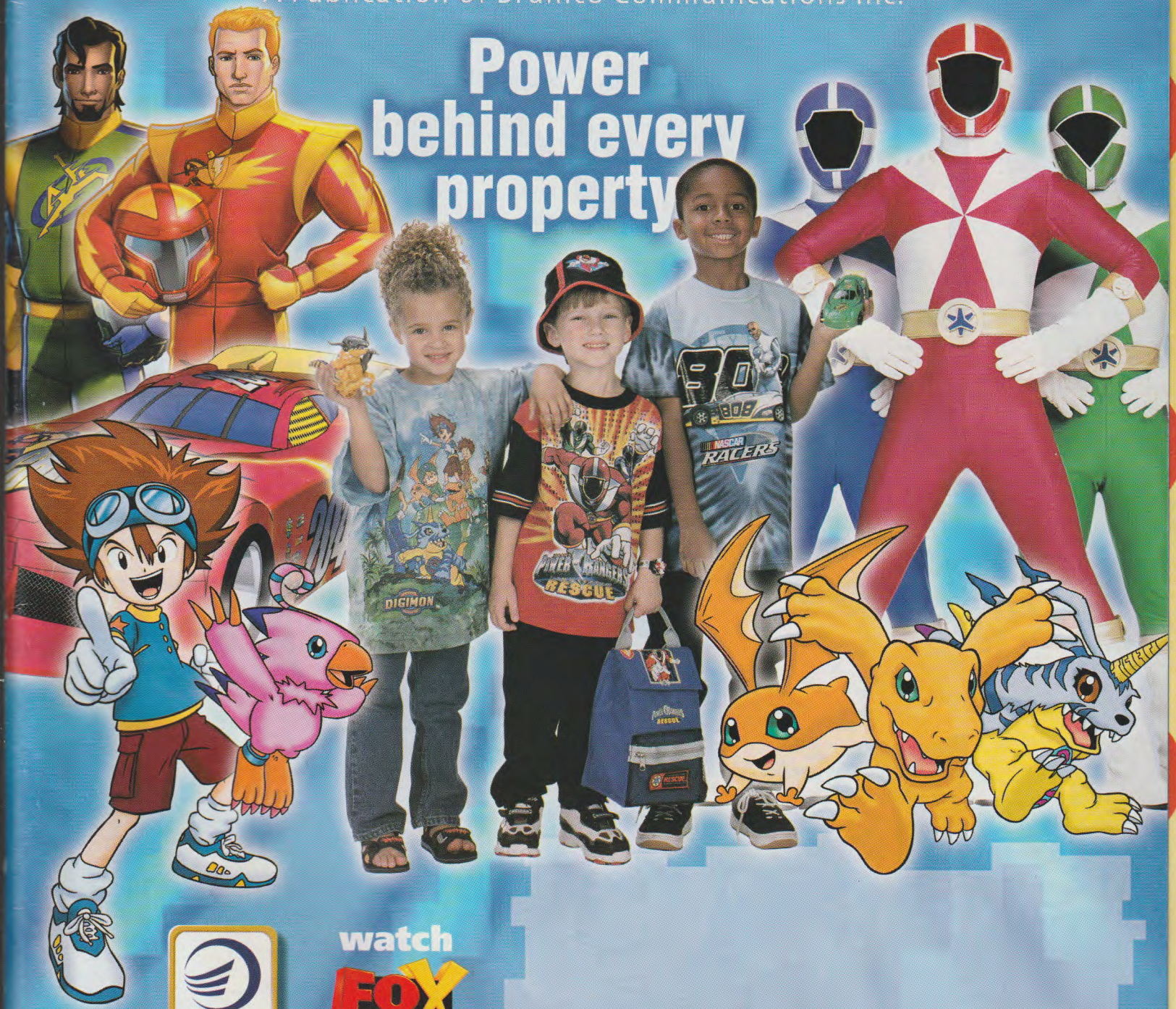
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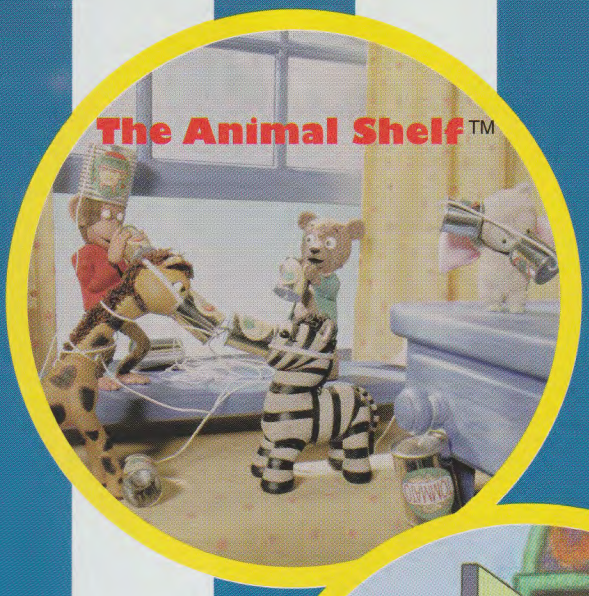
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About reaching children through entertainment

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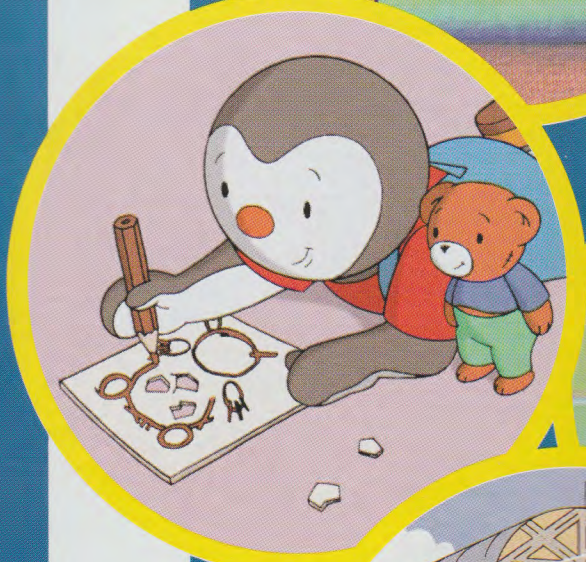
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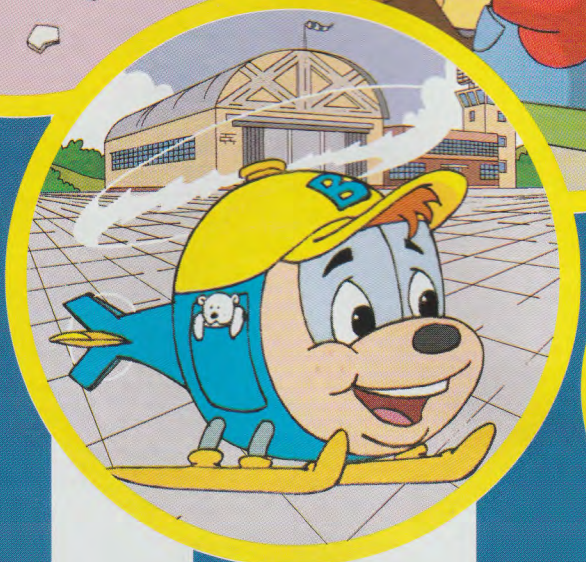












it's itsy bitsy time!™

Flying into children's hearts... Budgie

THE ANIMAL SHELF:TM & ♥ Cosgrove Hall Films. 64 ZOO LANE: TM & ♥ Millimages SAZoo Lane Prods. CHARLIE & MIMMO: TM & ♥ Le Armateurs, Cymax, VIP, TbEGO. BUDGIE: TM & ♥ Entertainment Rights. "it's itsy bitsy time!": TM & ♥ 2000 The itsy bitsy Entertainment Co.



Dear Colleagues:

I hope and trust that this letter finds you well.

In September of 1999, ***It's itsy bitsy Time!*** premiered on Fox Family Channel and Treehouse Television (Canada) to critical acclaim. Now, in Winter 2000, in addition to our key core programs, *The Animal Shelf*, *Charley & Mimmo* and *64 Zoo Lane*, ***It's itsy bitsy Time!*** is pleased to welcome our newest star - *Budgie*, based on the popular book series written and created by The Duchess of York. *Budgie* is a little helicopter who takes on big adventures and rescues those in need in his spare time.

As the success of ***It's itsy bitsy Time!*** builds in North America, we are pleased to announce that The itsy bitsy Entertainment Company is expanding the program concept internationally beginning next Fall.

It remains our mission at The itsy bitsy Entertainment Company to bring the very best in preschool entertainment to children throughout the Americas, and now, with our expansion, throughout the world.
As always...

With All Good Wishes,

Sincerely,

Kenn Viselman
Chairman
The itsy bitsy Entertainment Company

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NODDY™ has hit the ground running!

Initial sell-throughs have definitely exceeded our expectations, and we look forward to his continued growth in the new millennium. If he can make it here, he can make it anywhere!"

David Niggli
Executive Vice President
of Merchandising
FAO Schwarz



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...made from children's dreams!
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FEBRUARY 2000

"yikes!

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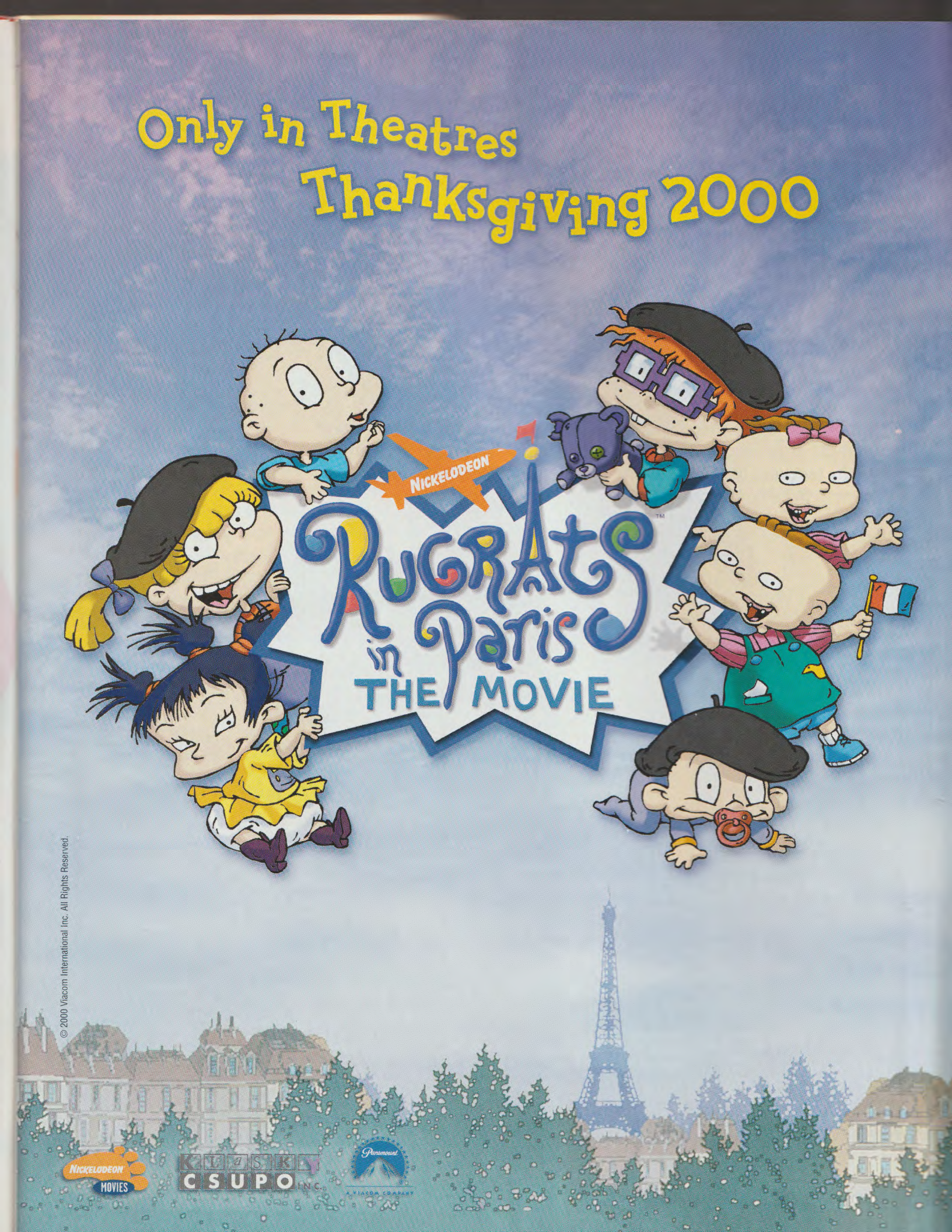
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KidScreeners

Fave new live-action show:
Girls: *Odd Man Out*
Boys: *100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd*

Fave live-action show overall
Girls and boys: *Kenan and Kel*

hot picks of the month as chosen by Griffin Bacal's LiveWire on-line Kid Think tank


Only in Theatres
Thanksgiving 2000
NICKELODEON
Rugrats in Paris
THE MOVIE
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Teletubbies™
"Whenever my little siste
she runs around the roo
Robert Tile - age 7
New Orleans, LA
"The biggest Teletubbies fans in the world live in my house - my twin toddlers adore the fabulous four...and me too!"
Catherine and Melissa's Mommy
Boise, Idaho
"The Teletubbies are my frie
they make me laugh and la
Rachel Werfel - 3-years you
Boca Raton, Florida
"As a preschool teacher, I find the Teletubbies format to be very clever and most appealing to small children because they get to see very friendly teachers as well as lots of children enjoying the lesson."
Maureen Milano, Preschool Teacher
Brooklyn, NY
"I love Mommy, Daddy, my doggy and Teletubbies."
Carly Deegan - age 2 1/2
Phoenix, AZ

r watches the Teletubbies,
m and tries to hug me."

"My brother likes the Teletubbies more than his toys."
Lucia Martinez - Age 11
Fort Worth, TX

"Teletubbies have undoubtedly helped my daughter show affection. Her recent desire to express love and compassion has brought tremendous joy to me and my family."
Emily Clarke
Fairfax, VA

nds,
ugh."
ng

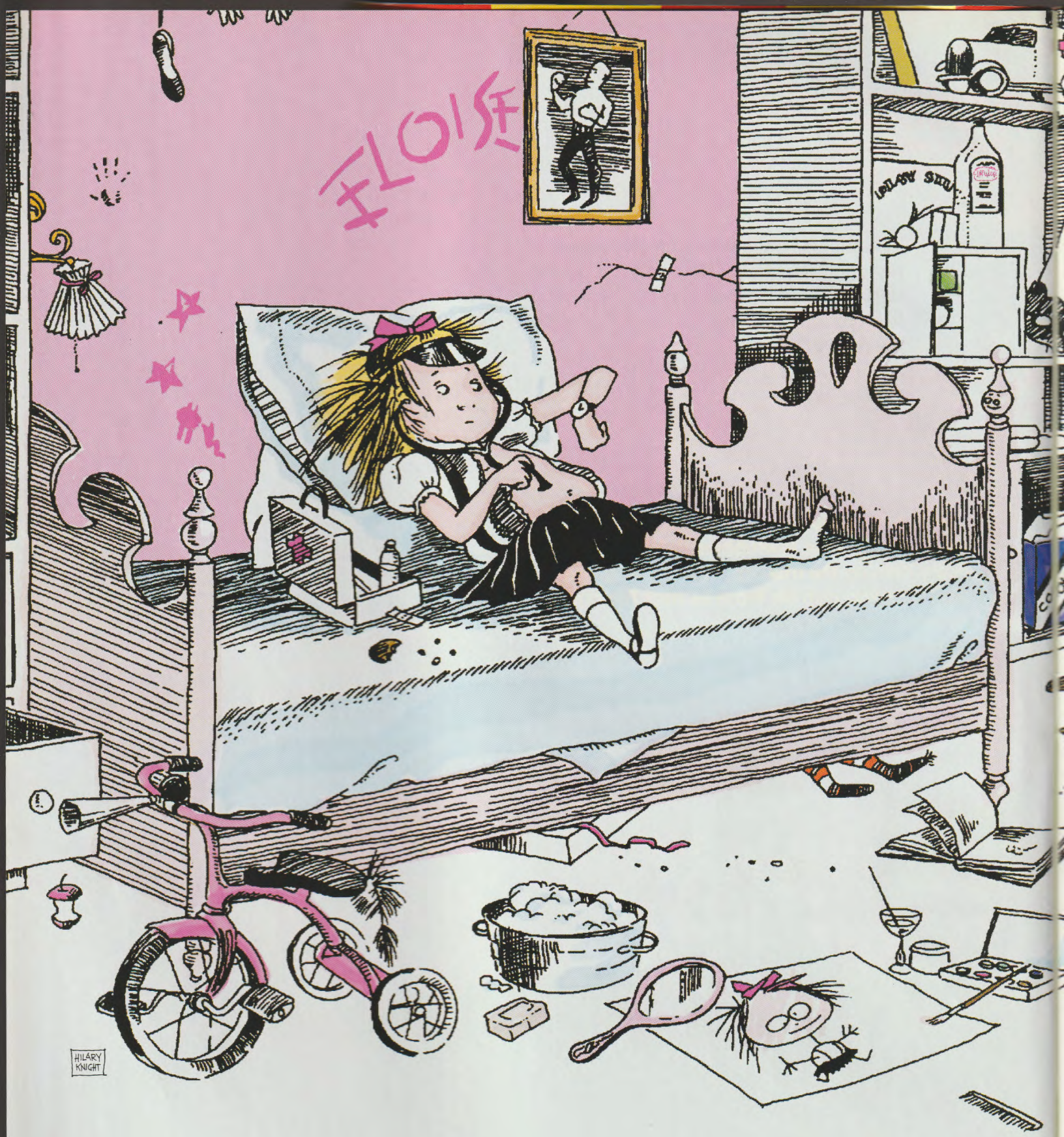
"Do you Teletubbies have little beds because you are so little? You are cool."
Jason Harris
Portland, OR

"We are three adults aged 18, 36 & 65 who can't get enough of the Teletubbies!!! We have purchased every item on the market. Would you consider starting a fan club for those us over the age of three?"
Manny, Steve & Hollie
Kaneohe, HI

"The Teletubbies celebrate uniqueness and individuality without ever mentioning the differences. Being colorblind has never looked so vibrant."
Geraldine Limata
Chicago, IL



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OOOOOOOO I ABSOLUTELY LOVE AN ENORMOUS FAI

OF COURSE, WHEN IT COMES TO TOYS, I'M AN

R...

AVID COLLECTOR.

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kidScreen
February 2000 • Volume 5, Issue 2

What does it take to make a property successful? The right toy…



BY MARY MADDEVER

While there is no fail-safe secret formula for taking over the world (don't tell Pinky and the Brain), success increasingly relies on staging more visibility than the next character. Whether it's a TV show or a toy—or both—without a superior platform plot, fahgeddaboudit.

This issue, we take a look at the stepped-up efforts producers must make to promote their shows once they've hit the airwaves ("Life after sales—why indies can't sit on their promotional laurels as soon as the ink is dry," page 29), and a toy company's extensive original on-line animation production efforts ("Small toycos turn to the Web to create shows for their toys," page 42).

Beyond the QSR deals and other promotional components prodcos and partners line up to create awareness around new series, the next area that becomes crucial in the life of a property is merchandise licensing—where TV becomes toy.

Beyond the additional revenue potential, this relationship helps advertise and promote the property, which David Palmer, VP of marketing at Sony Pictures Family Entertainment, assesses as increasingly "vital." Palmer goes on to stress that "it's vital to have a *great* partner, someone who's devoted to the success of the show *and* has the creative abilities to translate the show elements into an innovative toy line."

For the P.O.V. from the other side of the licensing fence, this issue's Toy Fair special report looks at the pros and cons of licensed versus original toys from the toy manufacturers' perspective. Unimaginative translation from screen to toy often seems to be a culprit contributing towards unfulfilled sales expectations—the bane of the licensing world's existence. In our Advertising to Kids report, creative directors cite "stories" as a key element to grab kids attention, and stipulate that "the story has to spring straight from the heart of the product in question." Arguably, all the advice on embodying the product in compelling ad creative is applicable for successfully taking a TV or film property to toydom.

With the current state of toy technology, there is less excuse for toys not to pick up on the essence of the original entertainment property. Indeed, the technology exists to practically replicate a toon as a toy, right down to interaction and—in the case of *Chicken Run* toys—texture ("Squishy toys for *Chicken Run*," page 91 in RadarScreen). Perhaps this is most crucial for film, where the window to capture imagination (and sales) is smaller.

About half of the over US$20-billion toy industry consists of electronic toys. For the first time this year, most of the list to Santa at our house fell squarely in the high-tech category—the QX3 Computer Microscope (endless digital capture and effects application fun), the Nick Click camera (again, more fun turning your friends into toons than previously possible), and the K-Nex five-in-one robot kit. The good news for licensors is, like Nick's camera, all of this toy tech is eminently brandable and exponentially more fun when you splice some well-known characters into the mix.

Previous iterations of interactive toys, like tamagotchis or Furby—which have qualities in common with pets—were an interesting fork in the road for the licensing side of the toy biz. They began as original toys, but are ideally designed to either have licensed characters applied to them, or to spawn their own entertainment vehicles, given the nature of their character as toys. Their next-gen offspring—E.T. Furby and *Digimon*—indicates that, like previous evolutions of toys, there will be cross-pollination, with characters now fluidly moving across platforms with more of their uniqueness intact. The technology is out there ("High-tech toys," page 63).

Cheers, MM

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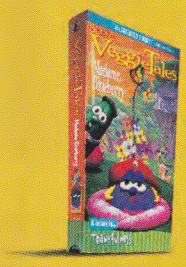
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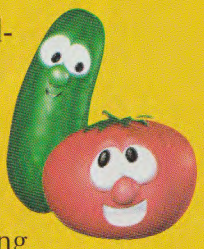
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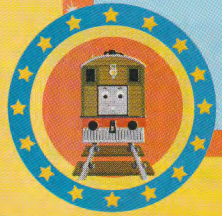


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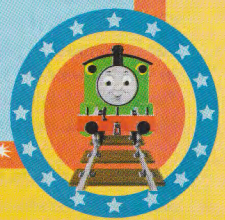
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This monthly supplement highlights news and issues of special interest to those retailers who sell children's products. KidScreen Retail reflects our increased commitment to serve the information needs of kids retailers and those in the business of reaching children through entertainment.
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RadarScreen
RadarScreen is a quarterly supplement to KidScreen that charts licensing and promotional opportunities related to children's/family features scheduled for release in the years ahead.
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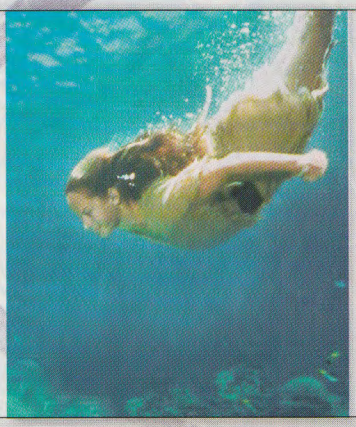
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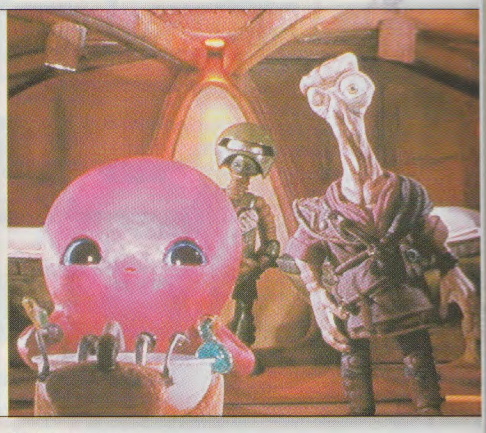
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The New Adventures of Ocean Girl

26 x half hour children's series

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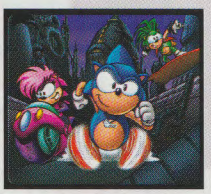


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du Pontavice takes over Gaumont's toons

BY PASCALE PAOLI

ON the heels of selling 80% of its drama and documentary production subsidiary to division president Christian Charret last July, French media conglom Gaumont has also auctioned off its animation arm, Gaumont Multimedia, to Marc du Pontavice, the toon division's former president. Du Pontavice left GM a year ago to start up his own multimedia production company called Xilam. The sell-off is not surprising given Gaumont's recently announced intent to focus purely on film activities.

The final deal stipulates that Xilam will take over all of GM's assets, including an animation catalog composed of series like *Highlander*, *Skydancers*, *Dragonflyz*, *Space Goofs*, *Oggy and the Cockroaches* and *The Magician*, as well as the *Lucky Luke* feature film and series. With Gaumont staying on as associate co-producer, Xilam will also take on two projects currently in production: the second 78 x seven-minute run of *Oggy and the Cockroaches* (a co-pro with France 3 and Canadian prodco Megafun), which is slated for a November 2000 delivery; a video game called *Stupid Invaders* (based on the TV series *Space Goofs*), which will be distributed by Montreal-based Ubi Soft; and a cartoon series called *Zorka* that's in the development phase.

Finally, Xilam has also taken over the lease of GM's animation studio and has committed to retaining all existing GM staff there.

Marc du Pontavice's short-term strategy will be to deliver 60 half hours each year, at the same time continuing to diversify the company's activities. His goal is to devote 50% of the company's energies to multimedia and Web development. Gaumont Multimedia's annual gross revenue is between US$13 million and US$16 million.

Nick's GAS laces 'em up with the NHL

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

Nickelodeon's digital sports channel the Game and Sports Network (GAS) has inked a multiyear agreement with the National Hockey League that will see it develop kids content based on the NHL. Primarily, GAS will produce and air programming blocks around special NHL events like the Stanley Cup finals. The content will be similar to the all-access GAS coverage the net provided for Major League Soccer's all-star game last November, consisting of game highlights, behind-the-scenes game footage and player interviews, says Nick spokesperson Beth Hergenhan. As per the agreement, GAS will include regular features on the NHL on its Web site (www.gas.nick.com)and in its monthly magazine. The deal also calls for GAS and the NHL to collaborate on a weekly half-hour NHL show, although at press time, the show's format and start date had yet to be finalized. GAS will kick off its coverage of the NHL later this month by broadcasting two hours of programming on the NHL's All-Star game, which will be held in Toronto, Canada on February 6.

Fox bags Italy with new channel

Fox Kids Europe is adding its 11th channel, Fox Kids Italy, on April 1. Ynon Kreiz, chairman and CEO of FKE, says the company will apply the full-press localizing treatment, right down to looking at adding a local puppet host to the clan—à la the famous rubber glove stars of France.

The new all-Italian digital satellite channel, run by managing director Francesco Nespega, will be available to 400,000 Italian subscribers via the Stream pay-TV platform. The Rome-based channel, aimed at kids ages two to 14, will air about 90% dubbed programming from Saban's library and about 10% acquisitions, including some local community content and promos. It will broadcast a combo of 70% toons and 30% live-action series for 15 hours daily from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. A Fox Kids Italy Web site will launch concurrently with the channel, and the company is looking at other interactive TV possibilities in the future. **AD**

Do-it-yourself blocks

Columbia TriStar International Television (CTIT) has created a stand-alone graphics package called ANIMAX that allows broadcasters to create their own customized branded animation block for kids. On top of accessing one or more hours of CTIT-produced fare in weekday or weekend slots, broadcasters will also receive a complete ANIMAX Branding Package, including a launch kit, promotional elements, and a support guidebook for running on-air sponsorships, cross-channel/time slot promos and watch-and-win contests. All components will be generic, textless, and are easily customized with local network logos.

In addition to a broadcaster's already existing lineup, they may round out their ANIMAX block with programming culled from new CTIT series (including *Beast Machines*, *Big Guy & Rusty The Boy Robot*, *Popolocrois*, *Beast Wars*, *Max Steel* and *Starship Troopers: The Series*) or from CTIT's collection of long-running shows. **JAK**

Moss exits YTV

Making the move back to his hands-on production roots, Peter Moss is readying to leave his position as VP of programming and production for Canadian youth channels YTV and Treehouse TV to join Cinar as president of Cinar Entertainment. As of March 1, Moss will be responsible for Cinar's entertainment business in North and South America and Asia.

Says Moss about the move: "The key attraction is the chance to go into production again—I've been missing it badly. In the last two years, the YTV schedule has come back from the doldrums—it's so far ahead of the competition right now that it's almost embarrassing, so really it's a question of new challenges for me."

Reporting to Moss will be: Cassandra Schafhausen, promoted to exec VP of creative affairs; Francois Deschamps, exec VP of operations; Lesley Taylor, exec VP of productions; Patricia Lavoie, VP of live action; and Louis Fournier, VP of sales and co-productions.

David Ferguson has been upped to president of Cinar Europe. Both Moss and Ferguson report directly to chairman and co-CEO Micheline Charest and president and co-CEO Ron Weinberg.

To fill Moss's shoes, YTV has promoted Paula Parker from director of programming to the vacant VP slot. **JL**

Web toons vie for ad dollars

BY ALLISON DUNFIELD

While AOL's announced acquisition of Time Warner tended to eclipse all other deals as the ultimate corporate merger, the close of the century saw studios announcing on-line news almost daily. A lot of the activity centered on on-line streaming animation. As the millennium came to a close, it seemed like nobody wanted to be left out of the Internet animation game.

One glitzy new animation offering was the launch of Time Warner's Entertaindom, arguably the most comprehensive entertainment site on the Web thus far, with reams of vault Looney Toons episodes, as well as completely new stuff.

But how will the market sustain burgeoning new toon sites and alliances? Recent entries include the likes of Film Roman's Level13.net, Wild Brain's launch of a toon site on Yahoo, and POP.com from the combined efforts of DreamWorks and Imagine Entertainment.

Studies by Internet research companies like Jupiter Communications estimate that by 2004, Internet TV will help to generate US$10 billion in revenue. According to the IAB (Internet Advertising Bureau) Ad Revenue Report from 1998, on-line advertising has definitely increased from about US$266.9 million in 1996 to US$1.9 billion in 1998.

Basically, there are several models for turning these sites into money-makers, including click-through banner ads, programming advertising, content sponsorship, direct e-mail campaigns or membership/subscription fees.

But according to ad agencies, the response to the splashy on-line toon deals has been underwhelming thus far. It seems ironic that although the Web is becoming more and more like TV (with mergers making sites into "supersites"), kid companies are still cagey about the amount of resources they're putting into on-line advertising, using unfavorable comparisons to TV as a major sticking point. However, that may change in the next few months.

Dana Kovacic, director of new media development for Pearl River, New York-based Active Media Services, says part of the problem is the animation sites in particular are still very new and adds, so far, none of her clients have asked about advertising on the animation-based Web sites. Kid clients want to align themselves with the likes of well-known, well-developed kid sites like Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network or even parenting Web sites, where they are more comfortable.

"It's still kind of iffy to the general population," she says. And although more and more of her clients are choosing to advertise on-line, Kovacic says that on the whole, it's still either a nonexistent or very small portion of the marketing budget.

However, she says kidcos are recognizing the value of using on-line ad presence—to help build a brand. Or, for aligning with networks both on- and off-line, like Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network or MTV. Debbie Solomon, group research director for J. Walter Thompson, feels this model will become especially important when television and the Internet finally converge. "Most [methods] are supplemental. They're not the primary [advertising] thing they do."

To Matt Maginley, VP media director for Towne Silverstein & Rotter, branding on the Web isn't as important as e-commerce. He says the key for companies deciding to advertise on-line is the return on investment model.

Lisa Donohue, senior VP media director for Starcom, a division of Chicago's Leo Burnett, adds that advertisers are also looking to see how much time individual users are spending at the site and if users are "clicking through"—that is, going to a site, seeing an ad, and then visiting the advertiser's site. Agencies can maximize the success of ads by making agreements with sites to track how the ads are doing and move them around accordingly so that if an ad isn't generating a lot of interest on one area of a site, it can be moved to another section. "It's very much a real-time media buying and planning issue," says Donohue.

Most agency gurus say all of their clients are advertising on-line to varying degrees, but that it still doesn't come close to TV in terms of budget or effort.



Time Warner's Entertaindom

"I don't think people are going to dramatically cut television budgets to go on the Internet," says Solomon. "TV is the most important medium for reaching kids right now. I don't see that changing."

Garry Carr, senior VP and group director of New York agency Western Initiative, agrees. He sees the future advertising success on toon sites lies in ad agencies developing separate sales forces that concentrate only on lassoing on-line-specific advertising.

But the entertainment giants themselves think they've got something special and advertisers will be attracted, especially to the unique features of their sites.

Richard Sutton, VP of sales and client marketing for Warner Bros. and Entertaindom.com, says one of the things advertisers will find fascinating is Entertaindom's cache of new, exclusive-to-the-Web episodes. He says this gives Entertaindom an advertising edge because it focuses on a wider niche than other sites. While in his opinion, there is room for both independent toon sites and larger studio sites to co-exist, he adds that the indies will now have more trouble getting noticed if they don't have the cross-promotional power to advertise on

Web toons continued on page **26**




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Web toons continued from page 23

TV or Web portals, leading to their being swallowed up by the big guys. Now, it seems, even the big guys are getting swallowed up.

Increasingly, Internet animation will become less about the mouse lying idle on the mouse pad and more about using it to interact with advertising. Sutton suggests two different interactive advertising models that will allow consumers to feel they're more in control of what they're viewing. One is the e-commerce area on Entertaindom (he calls it the "smartest mall on the Web"), which tracks the consumer's areas of interest and reacts by guiding the consumer accordingly. He also says TV-style commercials like a seven-second full-page spot will be Web-ready soon, which will be programmed to come up while the viewer is waiting for another screen. So far, there are no plans for subscription fees to Entertaindom. Revenue will come mainly from e-commerce and advertising.

Sutton says the time was right to launch the Net giant because users themselves have changed. The Web isn't for geeks anymore.

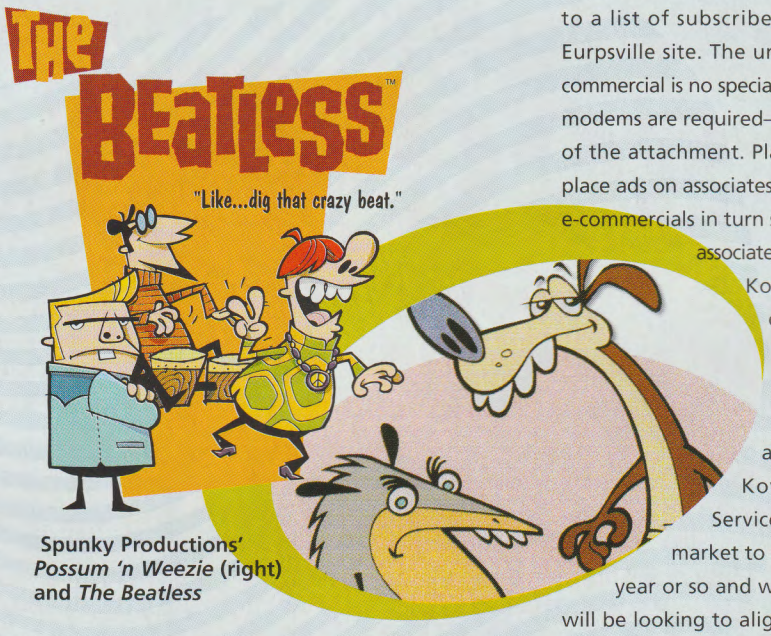
"With prices of PCs falling, there's a big bubble of new consumers coming on. The key word is consumers." He says this new breed is made up of the ordinary guy, or "folks who go to movies."

For the networks themselves, figuring out how to get noticed is a bit of a free-for-all. "It's the wild west right now," says Sam Register, VP of creative for Cartoon Network Online—one of the frontiersmen, you might say, in the world of Internet cartooning. Since its inception in spring 1998, the site has generated advertising gigs from the likes of McDonald's, Reebok and Gap Kids.

Although most studios seem to be trying to get on-line as fast as they can, some, like DIC, are laying low, doubting that going onto the Web will be a real money-making venture.

"We've been approached by a lot of people, but it's such a feeding frenzy. Our strategy was to sit back and come up with a real strategy," says Robby London, executive VP creative affairs at DIC. While DIC has some on-line plans brewing, London says: "It seems easier to avoid the commercials on the Web." In London's opinion, the reason so many people are jumping on-line with their animation is because it's a cheap way to get air-time for programming in an era when the TV landscape has been increasingly fragmented and difficult to enter for independent animators.

The newest of the newbies is probably the DreamWorks and Imagine Entertainment announcement of joining forces to launch POP.com in April. The site's most unique feature, according to chairman and CEO Ken Wong, is its call for program submissions from which the best will be offered development deals at DreamWorks and Imagine. He says this grass-roots technique will hopefully give the site word-of-mouth advertising along with curiosity that will get sponsors interested in the site. Revenue will be mainly based on e-commerce and advertising. It's a hot time to launch a site, he says, because the first wave of commercially-based applications set out a good blueprint for how to improve them the second time around.



Spunky Productions' *Possum 'n Weezie* (right) and *The Beatless*

Another hot Net toon prodco, San Francisco-based Spunky Productions, announced its latest deal last month with Harvey Entertainment to produce and distribute Richie Rich Internet toons on both the Harvey and Spunky sites. Plans are also in the works for more of the Harvey library to go on-line this year.

CEO Karl Kronenburger says Spunky is moving away from banner advertising as a revenue source into more interactive, "rich media" pieces within programming. Spunky also plans on crossing its characters over to TV which, in turn, will hopefully bring people to the site.

One company that has e-commerce and education wrapped into its on-line animation is Eurpsville, U.S.A., based in Port Washington, New York. It recently formed a strategic alliance with eCommercial.com to create and broadcast an animated series for kids called *The Eurps e-Story Cartoon Club*. The difference here is, rather than have parents and kids find the sites, the toons find them via a media-rich e-mail (an e-commercial, which is a compressed e-mail attachment featuring interactive video, audio, etc. created by eCommercial.com) sent weekly to a list of subscribers who sign up at the Eurpsville site. The unique feature of the e-commercial is no special browsers or high-speed modems are required—they run with the click of the attachment. Plans are in the works to place ads on associates' Web sites as well, with e-commercials in turn sent to members on the associates' subscriber lists. Michael Kohn, president and CEO of Eurpsville, U.S.A., says e-commerce is a big part of the plan as well, with plush characters made available on-site.

Kovacic of Active Media Services expects the Internet market to shake down in the next year or so and when it does, companies will be looking to align themselves with sites that have come out as the big players. Those will be either highly targeted specialty sites with cool content, or large, well-known sites like Entertaindom. She predicts the larger animation sites will do well because "the sites themselves can integrate some very creative ad opportunities."

Maginley of TSR sees the market settling out in terms of which on-line advertisers are best able to cater their advertising to the consumers of these toon sites. But he says the future commercial success of these toon sites will really come down to their actual content. "There will be a shakeout, but not in the way people perceive companies swallowing each other." He says there will be room for niche sites and "as these niche sites become more popular, they get dispersed within the community and become marketing tools."



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Life after sales—why indies can't sit on their promotional laurels as soon as the ink is dry

BY JO ANNE KENNY & VIRGINIA ROBERTSON

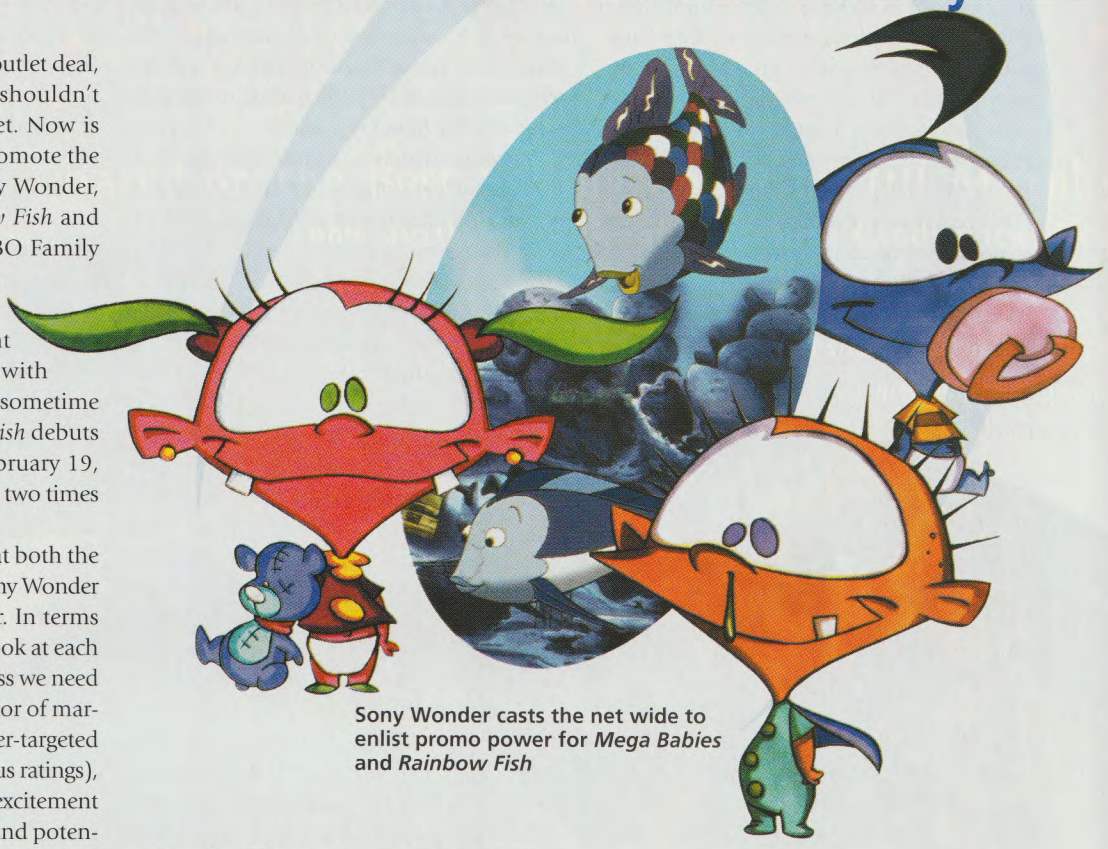
After landing a major U.S. outlet deal, today's indie producers shouldn't pause to celebrate just yet. Now is the time to redouble efforts to promote the show. Such was the case for Sony Wonder, when its two new toons *Rainbow Fish* and *Mega Babies* got picked up by HBO Family and Fox Family respectively. *Mega Babies* launched on Fox Family in October for one week, then went back into creative development with hopes of returning to the channel sometime in the coming months. *Rainbow Fish* debuts on HBO Family's airwaves on February 19, airing as part of its preschool block two times a day, seven days a week.

"We're promoting both shows at both the trade and consumer levels," says Sony Wonder VP of creative affairs Loris Kramer. In terms of plotting the best strategy, "We look at each property to determine the awareness we need to build," says Sony Wonder director of marketing Lisa Cappel. While consumer-targeted PR pumps up viewer awareness (thus ratings), trade-targeted media blitzes build excitement for the property amongst current and potential promotional partners. "The measure of our success is how viewers embrace the properties, as well as the synergies we are able to build between our short-term and long-term partners," Cappel notes.

But PR does not a hit property make. Networks foot the bill for multitiered promotions for their own properties—many approaching a feature film level—but outside producers can find themselves at the back of the line or on their own in terms of supporting their properties on a similar level. Only in the case when an outside show is an immediate runaway hit do networks necessarily pony up for mega promo costs.

However, Kramer says partners such as Fox Kids are more likely to be persuaded to contribute advertising and promotion dollars if their relationship with the indie studio is very strong.

One strategy that some producers have employed is offering to go Dutch with broadcast partners on ad campaigns and high-impact promotions.



Sony Wonder casts the net wide to enlist promo power for *Mega Babies* and *Rainbow Fish*

The Jim Henson Company is another prodco that recognizes that its own promotion responsibilities do not end with the sale of a show. Whether it is a QSR deal, mall tour or retail promotion, Henson has done it all—both with network assistance and independently.

Around *Farscape*, an adventure series currently airing on the Sci Fi Channel that's known for its special effects and innovative animatronic creatures, JHC created a CD-ROM promotion designed to help drive viewers to the network. The disk, launching this month, contains additional footage that is not currently available in North America, along with character profiles and access to Web sites. Henson is incurring the cost of creating and replicating the CDs, after which the Sci Fi Channel will distribute them in its magazine. The hook lies in the fact that fans will have to tune in to the second season premiere on March 17 to get that special code that will permit access to the CD-ROM's info.

"We are definitely stepping up to the plate by providing additional content for our partners to use to leverage and help promote the show," explains Mike Polis, associate VP of marketing worldwide. The CD-ROM promo kicks off this month.

At a time when ancillary activities can help make or break a show's success, ongoing promotion is a piece of the puzzle that is kept in mind at all stages. "We believe that something like this is an investment on our part. Help promote the show now and partner with the Sci Fi Channel, so that come time when the ancillary pieces of business hit, it'll be that much bigger," explains Polis.

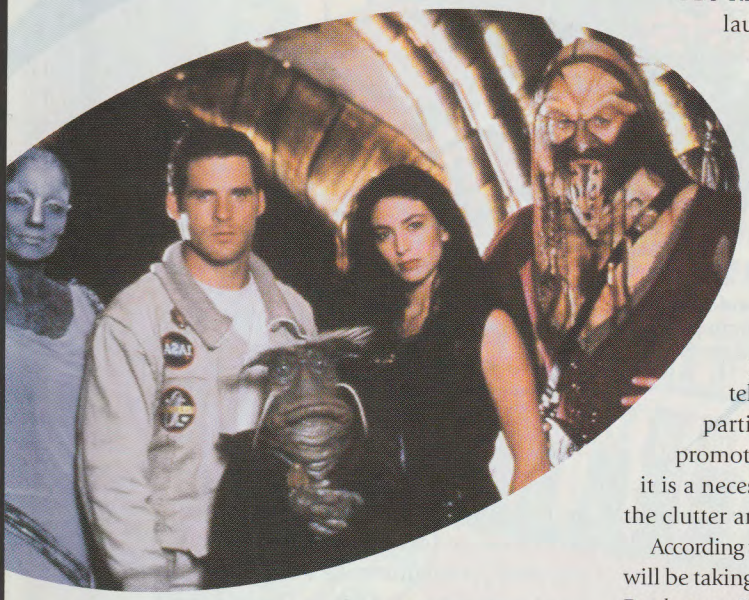
Despite working for a company that's heavily involved in doing self-promoted series, Polis points out that it makes sense for the networks to spearhead at least part of a show's promotion campaign because they have the largest voice, with the largest number of distribution channels with which

Promo continued on page **30**

Promo continued from page 29

to reach the largest number of people at one time.

A recent stumbling block, however, even if the network is kicking in for promotional efforts, involves determining exactly what to promote. "Do you focus on a block of programming, or on an individual show? Does your show get lost because [the broadcaster] is focused on promoting a particular block?" Polis queries. This latter strategy may achieve the broadcaster's objective of communicating to preschoolers that it has a preschool block, for example, but an indie producer with only one show in the block won't be getting enough individual push.



The Jim Henson Company kicks off a CD-ROM promo to hype the season premiere of *Farscape* on the Sci Fi Channel

"They may end up using your character, but it's one of five characters. It fits perfectly with the strategy that they are going for, but it's a challenge to try and ensure that you are serving both needs. The block will not do well if the show isn't doing well, or is not promoted—it's a tough balancing act," observes Polis.

Sid Kaufman, executive VP of licensing and merchandising at Nelvana, also sees the need to look at the big picture. "We have taken a brand marketing orientation toward our programs, which really deals with the integration of the media engines of TV, video, publishing, merchandise and retail. Regardless of who the broadcaster is, we try to integrate them into our process."

With increased vertical integration of broadcast and production entities, obstacles to this are often inevitable. "Because some of the broadcasters are theoretically competitors, we have to be sensitive to that," says Kaufman. Ultimately, what everyone cares about is an audience. So regardless of whether or not the broadcaster is a competitor, they too will opt to up viewership by participating in the promotion if the brand is popular.

Nelvana, which airs *Little Bear* on Nick Jr., *Babar*, *Pippi Longstocking* and *George and Martha* on HBO, as well as producing a block of six shows comprising CBS's entire Saturday morning, is also starting to churn out product for PBS. The pubcaster will air six of Nelvana's new book-based series in its first Saturday morning children's cartoon block, PBS Kids Bookworm Bunch, which launches this fall. Nelvana takes an active role in marketing its properties in all of these production relationships.

Jill Newhouse-Calcaterra, one of two marketing VPs recently hired at Nelvana, sees no choice when it comes to the continued promotion of a prodco's show. "Given the increasingly competitive nature of the children's television business—preschool in particular—this sort of additional promotional exposure is not an option; it is a necessity in order to break through the clutter and make your show a success."

According to Newhouse-Calcaterra, Nelvana will be taking an active role in promoting the Bookworm Bunch block, not unlike the lead they took in promoting the CBS Kidshow Saturday morning lineup. For that block, Nelvana hired The Regan Group to create a national Toys 'R' Us sweepstakes and affiliate TV promotion to increase viewership and ratings. The sweepstakes was supported with a 10-market cable buy, on-line postings and a dedicated Web page on CBS.com. Twenty-five CBS affiliate stations participated in the local TV promotion, which consisted of write-in-and-win contests, special events and other local on-air programs.

Similarly, Newhouse-Calcaterra says that avenues Nelvana will pursue for the PBS block include national advertising and promotional efforts, their own comprehensive PR campaign (in addition to PBS's efforts) and educational outreach. Alliance with a QSR partner is also a component Newhouse-Calacaterra would like to see as part of the promotional efforts Nelvana undertakes for the block.

Sony's Kramer notes that hot competition for kid eyeballs makes the enlistment of strategic cross-promotional partners more important than ever. Sony Wonder's full-time promotions executive, Howard Nelson, senior director of integrated marketing, expects to land a *Mega Babies* QSR deal within a few weeks of the show's relaunch on Fox Family. Specific attributes of the *Mega Babies* property, including its outrageous nature and action-oriented characters, help to favorably position the property in pitches to fast food partners. Since *Rainbow Fish* is a younger-skewing property, it is not being brought to the major fast food partners that seek the six- to 12-year-old boy demo delivered by *Mega Babies*. "When it comes to third-party alliances, QSR is the biggest challenge because of the tremendous amount of properties [the fast food companies] are presented with," Cappel notes.

Other partners that Sony Wonder is signing for both *Rainbow Fish* and *Mega Babies* include local cable operators, who can provide co-op advertising and air time for market-specific campaigns. For instance, a cable affiliate tie-in with Commodore Cruise Line out of Hollywood, Florida is in the works for *Mega Babies*, comprising promotional trip giveaways and contests supported through local cable affiliates.

Materials for advertising efforts can be expensive, and that's where Sony Wonder leans on its co-pro partners (Decode Entertainment in Toronto and Germany's EM.TV & Merchandising for *Rainbow Fish*; Ciné-Groupe in Montreal and Landmark Entertainment in Los Angeles for *Mega Babies*) to develop ad and promo materials, including commercial spots in some cases. Partners can also be relied upon to support campaigns in the territories for which they hold rights. "Properties such as *Rainbow Fish* and *Mega Babies* extend well beyond the U.S.," Cappel notes, adding that both series are already on the air in Canada (on TVO and Teletoon respectively.)

The final weapon Sony Wonder deploys in its ongoing battle to break through in the cluttered toon market is enlisting the help of other divisions of both Sony Wonder and its parent company Sony Pictures Entertainment—

Promo continued on page **54**


The Worst Witch
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GOT IT NEED IT PROGRAMMING STRATEGY

Noggin spawns original educon for older kids

BY KATE BARKER

With a mandate to provide educational fare for kids, 10-month-old Noggin (the intelligent, ad-free offspring of Nickelodeon and the Children's Television Workshop) is making the move from a library-based slate into original, longer-form (half-hour and up) series production geared to the six to 12 set. "The education media marketplace has served preschoolers better than older kids," explains Noggin GM Tom Ascheim. "There's a gap in the market. And a part of the reason why it's hard to reach older kids is that as kids go to school, they look to TV for entertainment, not education."



Clockwise from left: Noggin GM Tom Ascheim, *The Phred on Your Head Show*, *A Walk in Your Shoes* and *Cecil and Her Very Own Universe*

The network plugs 50% to 60% of its annual budget into original programming. Although Noggin likes to take on serious topics, Ascheim says: "We're not looking for talking heads that explain things to kids."

Noggin's serious bent is evident in the 13 x half-hour, live-action series *A Walk in Your Shoes*, produced in-house by Noggin in association with New York-based Bullfrog Productions. "With *A Walk in Your Shoes*, we're taking on issues of diversity and race, but kids are exploring the topic," Ascheim says. Slated to air in April 2000, the show revolves around two people who trade places—literally. Each episode features a different pair from opposite circumstances. The first ep, for example, looks at a country kid and a city kid. Future episodes will examine differences in race and geography.

Noggin embarked on an interactive promo for the show, offering a contest winner the chance to trade places with Ascheim. The winner ran the network for a day in January, while Ascheim trundled off to school. The switch was filmed, and Ascheim and the winner kept an Internet journal of their experiences. Ascheim says the promo fulfilled Noggin's mandate of putting kids in charge. "To do something powerful, like run a TV network, is a genuine kid fantasy."

As a part of the net's latest strategy involving turning short-form shows into long-form productions, Noggin recently commissioned Boston-based prodco Fablevison to create two new short-form toons, *Cecil and Her Very Own Universe* and *Swamp Dog*, scheduled to air later this year. Both shows will be between three and 10 minutes in length—with an undetermined number of episodes skedded to air in early 2000—and will be eyeballed for half-hour series potential. *Cecil* stars a 12-year-old girl who lives in a futuristic underground world with her robot dog. *Swamp Dog* looks at the life of 10-year-old Gyro, who belongs to an intergalactic flying circus.

George Newall and Phil Kimmelmean from Geomar Philms (of *Schoolhouse Rock* fame) are working on an animated order that incorporates music to examine technological breakthroughs of yore. The duo is also plugging away at a creative piece that centers on alien time travelers. Tom Snyder Productions, the prodco behind *Dr. Katz*, is developing a project that takes a humorous look at language, and Hodgson Bros., the company that created *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, is working on a co-pro with The Jim Henson Company that will get kids to make their own TV show. Noggin also ordered 10 more installments of the hour-long *The Phred on Your Head Show*.

Ascheim says the Network isn't focusing on acquisitions. "There aren't that many great shows for older kids that are educational to pick up. " A recent exception was *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, which Noggin acquired this fall. "We'd like to make our mark, so we need to invent," Ascheim says, though he stresses that he is always on the lookout for shows that fulfill Noggin's mandate of providing fun, educational programming that places kids in charge.

Noggin also focuses on interactivity to draw kid eyeballs to its slate. "We are more convergent than many of our brethren. [The Internet] is very much half of what we do," says Ascheim. For example, the upcoming toon *Swamp Dog* will incorporate on-line elements by giving kids a chance to advise the show's protagonist Gyro on his escapades. Traffic to Noggin's site (www.noggin.com) has increased exponentially since the network's launch, when it drew 20,000 users a month. Ascheim says it now draws close to one million. ●

The 24-hour network runs a preschool block from 5 a.m. until 2 p.m. Kids up to age 12 tune in from 2 p.m. on, and at midnight, a retro package of CTW library titles—including *The Electric Company* and *Sesame Street*—draws in the nostalgic 20- and 30-somethings. Other Noggin catalog series include *Blue's Clues*, *Ghostwriter* and *Nick News*.

With the network reaching 4.2 million of America's 75 million households with cable or satellite access, it still isn't big enough to grab much of a market share. (Networks must reach 19 million households before being considered by Neilsen ratings, and a network that reaches 14 million households rates less than a tenth of a percentage of the market share.) Still, Ascheim is confident that Noggin's unique programming strategy and vision will make the net a contender.



We're multiplying like...

Up Next...

WHAT'S DEVELOPING IN KIDS PRODUCTION

Ciné-Groupe gets serial with Saban and CTW

Ciné-Groupe has unveiled production deals on two major animation series, which together will cost US$25.5 million to produce.

WunschPunch



The Montreal-based toonco and two U.S. partners, Children's Television Workshop and IF/X Productions, will produce 40 half-hour episodes of *Sagwa: The Chinese Siamese Cat*, adapted from the Amy Tan (*The Joy Luck Club*) children's book. The US$12-million series will go into daily rotation in fall 2001 on PBS Kids Ready to Learn program block. Talks with a Canadian broadcaster are underway. The deal with CTW was initially developed by Ken Karsumoto, head of Ciné-Groupe operations in Los Angeles.

Sagwa follows the adventures of a spunky kitten who sets out to find her place in the world of ancient Chinese tradition. Each half-hour episode includes two 11-minute segments combining classic animation, music, folklore and fairy tales. The two traditional animation segments will be linked by an interstitial produced by Ciné-Groupe Interactive using Web animation techniques. Ciné-Groupe and CTW are distributing worldwide.

Earlier this month, Ciné-Groupe and Saban International Paris announced the start of production on *WunschPunch*, 52 half-hours of children's animation presold to Radio-Canada and France's TF1.

WunschPunch chronicles the adventures of a blundering cat and his more clever feathered friend as they foil a villainous duo with a destructive magic potion. The series is budgeted at US$13 million and is based on an original German novel by Michael Ende, author of *The Never Ending Story*.

A kid called *Treasure* from Cinar

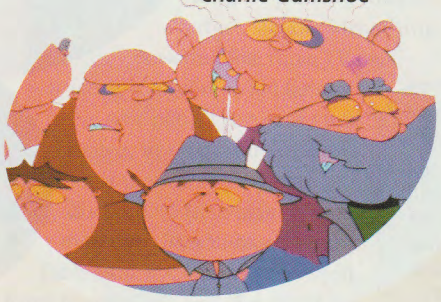


Montreal-based Cinar is teaming up with the BBC, in association with London-based Halo Productions, to co-produce *Treasure*, a 26 x 10-minute or 13 x 24-minute series geared to a family audience. Currently in production, the 2-D toon explores the lives of a teenaged hellion named Treasure, as well as her mom and grandmother. The almost 15-year-old hero lives to shop, dabbles in vegetarianism and wallows in the pig sty that is her room. Sound familiar? The series, budgeted between US$4.1 million and US$4.8 million, is based on Michele Hanson's U.K. syndicated newspaper column of the same name. The toon has been presold to YTV in Canada and to the BBC, where it will air in prime time in Q4 2000 or early 2001. Cinar handles worldwide distribution.

Up Next continued on page **36**

Lough House lines up three series

Charlie Gumshoe



The Isle of Man-based animation house is developing two traditional cel-animated and one CGI series.

Charlie Gumshoe is geared to the six to 10 set and follows the adventures of a regular kid who becomes a P.I. in his mind. "Once he's at school, things start to worry him," explains Lough House managing director and GM Phil Slattery. "He wonders 'why did the chicken cross the road, did it go on its own, or was it pushed?'" The voiceover is done à la Humprey Bogart in the *Maltese Falcon*, which gives the series a humorous edge, Slattery says. The 10 x half-hour series comes with a price tag of about US$2.4 million, with delivery of the first 13 episodes within 12 months of greenlight, and the rest to follow eight months later.

The Toolstreet Gang is a CGI series for preschoolers starring the contents of your average well-stocked tool box. A hammer, a spanner and a pair of pliers, for example, set about to fix something that's broken in each episode. The trouble is, things typically go amiss and the fix-it crew runs amuck. "We physically built the setting as a stage set, filmed [the tools], then digitized them, which gives an incredible depth to the background," Slattery says. Lough House originally made a pilot of the show skewed to an older crowd, but has since rejigged it for a younger set. The series, for example, is light on dialogue to appeal to preschoolers. "There are lots of oohs, aahs and eeks." The 52 x five-minute series is a co-pro with Paris-based animation company Cymax, which retains all French-speaking rights. The budget runs between US$3.6 million and US$4 million.

The Backyard is a 26 x seven-minute family-targeted series created by John Herdman, an Isle of Man artist. Slattery describes *The Backyard* as a *Tom & Jerry*-style toon. Budgeted at about US$1.5 million, the cel-animated series is set in a typical back yard. "Two slugs get most of the wise-crack lines," Slattery says. The series is from the P.O.V. of the animals, always. "You only see humans from the knee down."

Lough House is looking for co-pro partners and broadcasters for all three series. **KB**



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Up Next continued from page 34

Fox's Tara telefilm

Fox Family Channel's *Ice Angel*, starring Olympic gold medalist Tara Lipinski, will skate onto the small screen March 5. The live-action comedy centers around a star hockey player who is accidentally killed in a heavenly mix-up



and then reborn in the body of a prim Olympics-bound 17-year-old. The two-hour Fox Family Channel TV movie, budgeted at approximately US$3 million, will target a family audience. Saban International will distribute the telefilm internationally.

Sunrise's anime lands on Cartoon

With North American kids showing no symptoms of anime ennui, *Gundam Wing* should receive a warm welcome when it lands on Cartoon Network on March 6. Cartoon purchased half-hour eps of *GW* from Sunrise Entertainment, a subsidiary of Bandai, and plans to air the show five days a week during



its Toonami block. Based on a graphic novel by renowned Japanese author-animator Yoshiyuki Tomino, *Gundam Wing* is set several centuries in the future, and centers on an intergalactic civil war between earth and its space colonies. Much of the action in the show revolves around the space colonists, who use special mobile suits, or Gundam, to ward off the imperialist leanings of their earth-bound foes. *Gundam Wing*, which first aired on Japanese TV in 1979, has yielded 400 episodes, which cost Sunrise roughly US$100,000 each to produce, and has spawned eight films and six video game titles. Given its strong Japanese pedigree, Brian Goldner, executive VP and COO of Bandai America, is confident *GW* will follow in the footsteps of the company's most recent anime import, *Digimon*. To coincide with *Gundam*'s North American TV debut, Bandai will release several *GW* videos and a line of *GW* snap-together model kits to stores. Also hitting U.S. retail in March will be a *Gundam* game title for the Dreamcast console.

"In *Gundam*, there's already a built-in fan base among anime fans. There are hundreds of sites dedicated to its discussion. Our goal is to give a U.S audience the same compelling story line that Japanese audiences have been enthusiastic about for years," says Goldner.

In Development...

Anton looking for partners

Based in the Netherlands, Telescreen Distribution is hunting down pre-sales and additional partners for a whimsical short series called *Anton*. A co-production with Kratki Film in the Czech Republic, the pencil-drawn preschool toon will initially be produced as 13 five-minute episodes for a planned December 2000 completion. The budget for the initial run is US$455,000, although the total cost will be upped to US$1.8 million should the partners move ahead on 39 episodes that are planned. Based on a character created by Academy Award-winning animator Børge Ring, *Anton* stars a seven-year-old boy who uses his active imagination to make the real world more fun. All rights are currently up for grabs, with Telescreen handling distribution.



Virtual surfers suffer in *Megaram*

Spain's PPM Multimedia is tapping into kids' love of the Internet with a new US$6-million animated series for six- to 12-year-olds called *Megaram*. A co-pro project that's in development with Madrid-based Tabano Arts and Animation Films and France's Toon Factory, the 26 x 26-minute concept features



Megaram cybervillain Dr. Destroyer

young surfers trapped inside the Web by an evil despot named Dr. Destroyer. The cyberkids glean superpowers from their digital surroundings to foil the foul plots of Destroyer and his Virus henchman. In keeping with the high-tech theme, animation for the show layers 2-D characters over 3-D inside-the-Web backgrounds and foregrounds rendered by Tabano's 3-D branch Angelus. With broadcast negotiations underway with Germany's Super RTL and Spain's Via Digital, PPM is hoping to have the project done by late 2002. PPM is on the hunt for partners capable of developing Web games and CD-ROMs to augment the series' cyberappeal.

PPM is also shopping around a 200 x one-minute 2-D co-pro between Barcelona-based Studio Camera and New York's SPI. *Dr. Disaster* targets teens and young adults with a comedic plot centering around the medical mishaps of a bumbling physician and his equally incompetent assistant. Currently in production with a rough budget of US$1 million, *Dr. Disaster* is slated for completion in June. Distribution rights are shared by SPI and PPM, and no broadcasters have come on-board yet.

Mega offers another Net-inspired toon

California-based Mega Entertainment is shopping for co-pro partners and broadcasters for *EZ Net Surfers*, a 26 x half-hour cel-animated series targeting kids ages eight and up. Budgeted at US$300,000 per episode, the show is centered around a group of teen hackers who create a cyberwarrior to fend off a virus. Currently in preproduction, Mega Entertainment hopes to have it ready for delivery by the end of this year. Mega will handle worldwide distribution.

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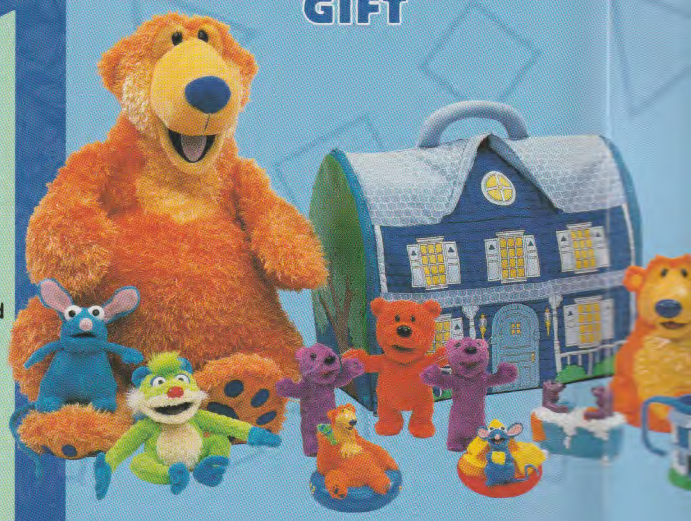


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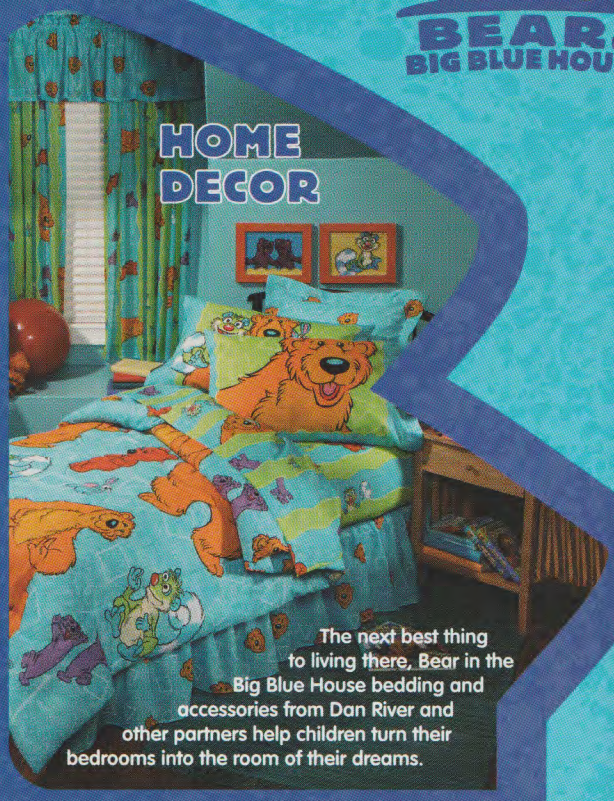


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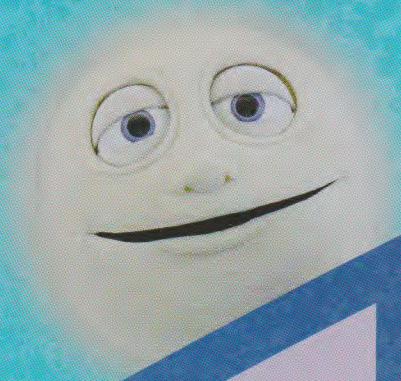


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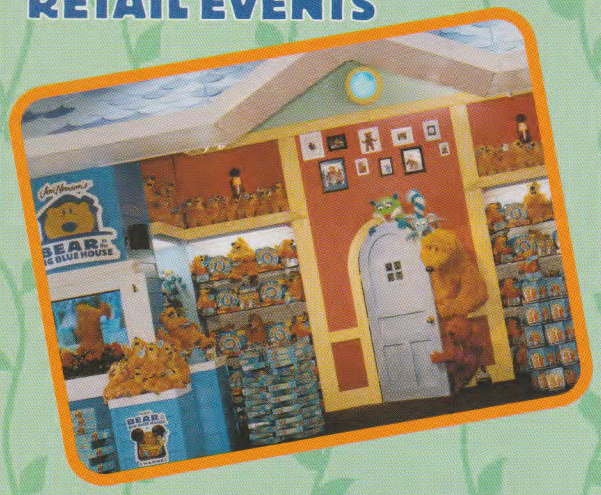
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G-day Cookie Monster, Bonjourno Elmo



The Children's Television Workshop is looking at consolidating locally produced content in its *Sesame Street* spin-offs around the world, with an eye on building a library of 10-minute episodes that could be marketed internationally.

Sesame Park, a co-pro with Canada's CBC featuring locally produced stories mixed with CTW-produced fare, will be the test case. CBC creative head of children's, youth and daytime programming Adrian Mills says the public broadcaster is consolidating the 10-minute local stories (which formerly aired in pieces throughout the half-hour eps) and airing them separately as *Sesame Park Snippets*. CBC is also continuing to air the full *Sesame Park* episodes, which include the *Snippets* material.

CTW, in turn, will dub and market *Snippets* internationally. Ancillary rights were still being hammered out at press time, but Mills says CBC is angling for a cut of any global revenues.

Cathy Chilco, CTW's VP of production/executive producer, international television group, stresses that whether CTW proceeds to consolidate and market local content from other *Sesame Street* spin-offs depends on the success it has with *Snippets*.

In other CTW news, *Open Sesame* will air on Nickelodeon in Australia this April. The nonprofit also inked a four-year licensing deal with Italy's satellite kids channel RaiSat Ragazzi to air 104 episodes of the series. The half-hour preschool show is billed as the best of *Sesame Street* and currently airs in more than 30 countries including Malaysia, Thailand, Greece, Finland, the Czech Republic, Armenia and Pakistan. **DH**

PBS to broadcast animated *Clifford*

PBS will broadcast 40 half hours of an animated *Clifford the Big Red Dog* series starting this fall. Scholastic Productions, the sole producer, is currently at work on the series starring the big-hearted red mutt. It's aimed at the three to seven set and although stories are based on the book series created in 1959 by author Norman Bridwell, the show's story lines are all new and will center around racially diverse characters. Clifford will be voiced by John Ritter, while Kel Mitchell of Nick's *Kenan & Kel* will voice Clifford's pal T-Bone.

Britt Allcroft picks up *Sooty*

The London-based animation company that owns *Thomas the Tank Engine* picked up a 50% equity stake in the Sooty property in a deal worth about US$7.3 million. No money will change hands, however, as Britt Allcroft will set up a jointly held company with Sooty International called Bridgefilms. Chatsworth Enterprises manages the licensing program for the mute British puppet that turns 52 this year. Sooty International independently produces the TV show *Sooty and Co.* for Granada TV.

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Communications for Business



Diane Rankin,
General Manager
Conferences & Events,
Brunico Communications Inc.,
Entertainment Division

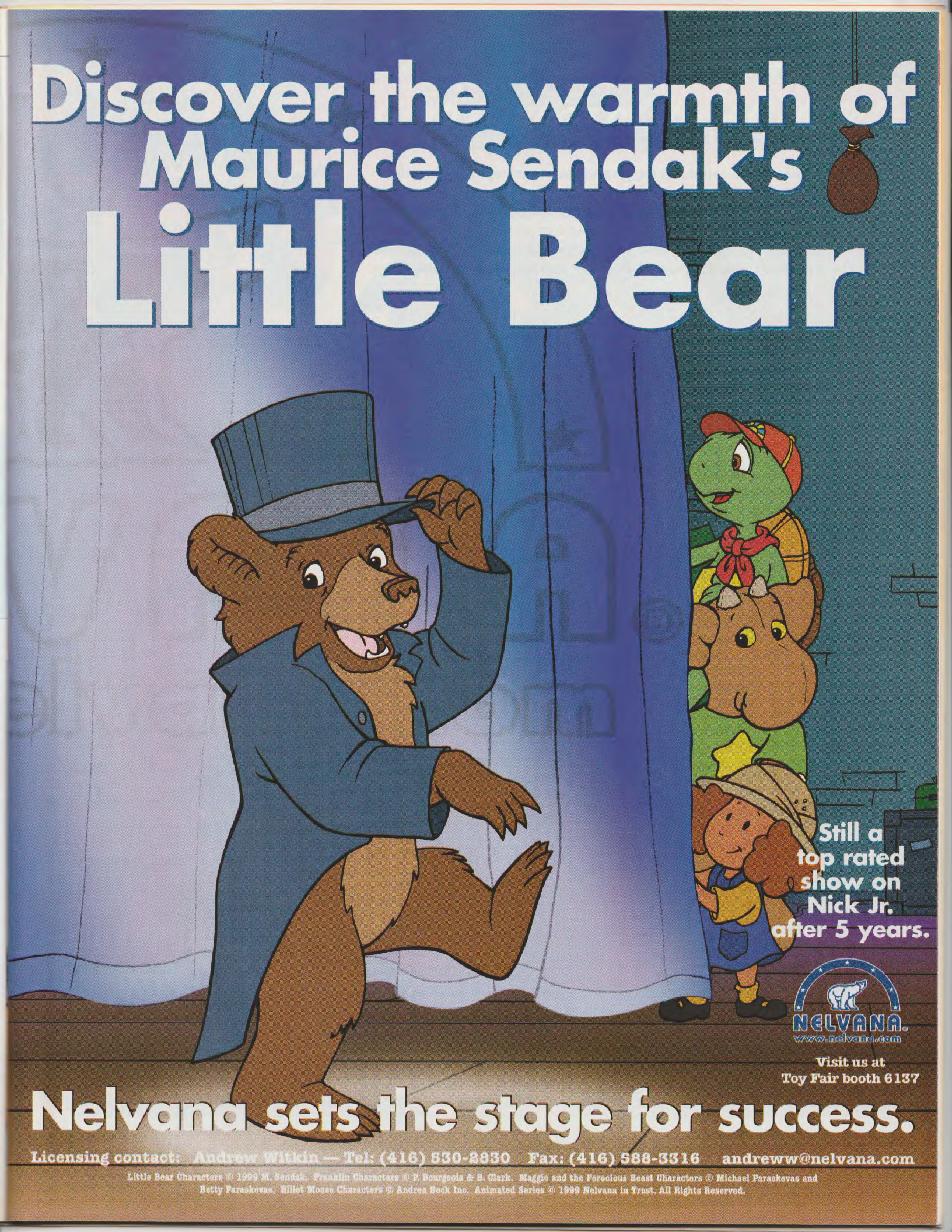
Shelley Middlebrook, Senior Vice President & Group Publisher, Brunico Communications Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Diane Rankin to General Manager of Conferences & Events of Brunico Communications Inc.'s Entertainment Division, which includes the KidScreen, Teen Screen, RealScreen, and Playback brands.

In her new role, Diane will be responsible for establishing business plans, content, securing speakers, managing logistics, marketing and sales plans for all conferences and events. Diane will also have shared responsibility for sponsorship sales with each Publisher/ Associate Publisher.

Diane has been with Brunico Communications Inc. for over four years and has worked on KidScreen, Playback and RealScreen. Most recently, Diane held the position of Associate Publisher of RealScreen.

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DIGITALIA: RATINGS AND RAVINGS

The Cyber Space

The Cyber Space column is logging off as our intrepid new media maven Greg Skinner is moving on to head up a new on-line youth market information company. In this, his last Cyber Space, Greg looks at the year's best kid Web sites, coming full circle from his very first *KidScreen* scribblings in our inaugural issue in January 1996, where he examined "the biggest, the baddest and best sites out there."

BY GREG SKINNER

It's time for our top kid Web site picks of 1999, and this year there were plenty to choose from. But even as hoards of new dot.coms entered the fracas, several sites stood out as distinctly better than others.

Highlighting each and every great Web site would be a full-time job for 100 monkeys, so we didn't even try. Never mind the volume—simple things like a lack of attention can demote a site from hero to zero in an instant. And while top 100 lists are good, the number of hits a site generates is often a function of market exposure through TV, exclusivity and deep pockets rather than good design. So the folks at Mina pooled findings culled from our daily surfing expeditions of the past year, using Go network's www.hot.com kids listing of the top 100 Web sites as a control. From there, we came up with our own top picks based on elements like staying power, unique characteristics, content and navigability.

Top site for retail: www.MXGonline.com

Cha-ching! With plenty of knickknacks and knickers flying everywhere, MXGonline is a true mogul in on-line shopping. The proprietor of copious amounts of clothing and lifestyle accessories for girls, the site offers up a truly comprehensive on-line catalog of the latest fashions, related ads (Pantene products), and extras like celeb interviews, tunes and trend-watching features. Highlights include a tie-in to Rocketcash (parent-sponsored on-line cash system at www.rocketcash.com) for EZ shopping, and the latest addition to the Web site, MXGtv—that's right kids, on-line broadcasting featuring Webisodes, music videos, and digital games!



Top site for entertainment: www.Teenhollywood.com

What's going on in the lives of teen superstars? Teenhollywood.com has all the answers for kids wanting to revel in the latest goo on their celebrity heroes. This site has plenty of minutiae on the latest in movies, TV, music and entertainment, and visitor commentary is encouraged, so there is plenty of it. Highlights include best bets (a great vehicle for promoting new shows), daily headlines, upcoming teen TV appearances and celebrity chats on Yahoo—all in a format of easy-to-access blurbs, quick tidbits and a super clean layout.



Top site for info: www.howstuffworks.com

The site to visit with even the most fleeting questions on how something, anything works. Forget about community-building and visitor feedback, this little wonder delivers the goods on what makes clocks tick, rockets zoom and preserves preserve. Comprehensive explanations of related topics and plenty of pictures help kids secure that much coveted A+ on their homework. Plus, the content isn't so advanced that Johnny average can't understand. A little bit of color and better graphics would push this portal straight over the top.



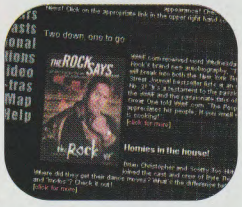
Top site for interaction: www.bolt.com

There are scads of outstanding elements that make this site a doozy, but the thing putting the pep in its pants is the understanding that kids love to have their say. Hence, interviews and kid testimonials make up the majority of the content. For instance, they post "your worst homework nightmare," racks of visitors comments for everyone to see, and stacks of popular opinion polls like "was the homework story BS or brilliant?" Not only is this site entirely up to speed with topics including TV, sex and dating, college and poetry (among others), there's also the Bolt store (snowboards, clothes, stuff), and Bolt chat. Want to meet people? We logged on to greet 4,680 others. Sign me up!



Top site for fans: www.wwf.com

Fancy the latest update on who bashed The Rock over the head with a chair, or the exploits of D-Generation X? Then this is undoubtedly the place to be. A brilliant piece of work, the key to WWF.com is that it lets fans relive the wrestling experience in vivid detail. Tons of pictures, bios, merchandise (talking trading cards, videos, pay-per-view, clothing), and the latest news on its stars, means that there is absolutely nothing missing. Even more outstanding is the use of the latest interactive media such as Realplayer and Windows Mediaplayer to deliver a plethora of fully archived video clips, sound bites and even Web casts! Hah, and you thought they were just a bunch of Neanderthals! ●



While The Cyber Space has gone off-line, Greg Skinner continues as director of Mina and can still be reached at gwhiz@minathinks.com.

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Small toycos turn to the Web to create shows for their toys

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

With the bidding for plum kids film and TV licenses ostensibly the purview of large, well-heeled toy corporations, many small toycos are effectively shut out from using entertainment as a marketing vehicle to help promote their toys to the public. For at least one toy company though, the Internet is enabling it to bypass these conventional channels of entertainment distribution by going direct to consumers with programming that supports its product lines.

"All of our toys are character-based, but if nobody knows what their stories are, and the company's not out there pushing them by spending hundreds of millions of dollars, then the toys won't get kids' or parents' attention. The Internet has given us a platform to present our own characters with our own stories," says Jeff Roda, VP of Rumpus Toys. The New York-based creator of Gus Gutz and Harry Hairball started offering short computer-animated cartoons based on its toys on its site (www.rumpus.com) in September, and currently produces shows for five of its toys, including Science Freaks, Eggles, Sally Satchel, Monster in My Closet and Space Puppies. According to Roda, the company plans to add another six cartoons by early June, including its first long-form animated feature, entitled *Herschel Hopper: New York Rabbit*.

"It's cross-marketing, in a sense. We want the cartoons to drive retail sales of the toys, but we also want the toys to promote the cartoons," says Roda.



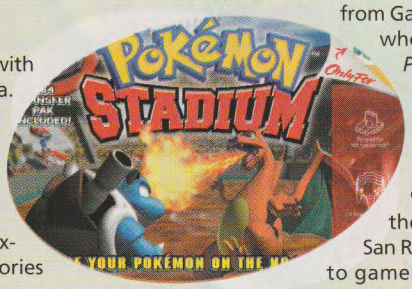
All of the cartoons, which Rumpus creates in-house using a staff of six animators, are produced with the Flash animation program,

Rumpus continued on page **58**

Digital news bytes

Sega goes for peripherals

♣ Sega recently signed a licensing partnership with peripheral company **Mad Catz** of Brampton, Canada. The deal marks a first between Sega and a third-party peripherals maker to produce a new line of 10 add-ons for Dreamcast that includes steering wheels, six-button control pads and a PC keyboard converter. Sega also announced a licensing agreement with **InterAct Accessories**, another peripheral manufacturer. The terms on the nonexclusive, three-year deal allow InterAct to develop accessories like fishing controllers and rumble packs for Dreamcast.



Let's make a deal

♣ San Francisco-based **Eidos** inked a three-product, multiplatform licensing deal with **Disney** to develop *Walt Disney World Racing* in the spring. The second title, based on Disney's animated feature *102 Dalmatians*, will street in the fall. Details of the third title are not yet available.

♣ New York-based **NewKidCo** and **Sony Pictures Consumer Products** of Culver City, California inked a multiyear, multiplatform deal to produce titles geared to kids under 12 based on the *Dragon Tales* TV series. The first title will be released in the fall.

♣ Toronto, Canada-based **Nikolai.com** inked a three-year deal to place the dot.com's kids entertainment site (www.nickolai.com) and its e-commerce site (www.toyboutique.com) across AOL brands.

Cashing in on the Pokémon craze

♣ **Nintendo**'s upcoming slate for N64 cashes in on its Pokémon success. *Pokémon Yellow* (released in October), *Pokémon Blue* and *Pokémon Red* (released in September '98) have sold over 11 million units in North America since their release. The latest offering, *Pokémon Stadium*, uses a transfer pack—technology that's new to Nintendo—to convert saved games from Game Boy Color into N64 format. Kids who have been catching digimonsters with *Pokémon Blue, Red* or *Yellow* for Game Boy Color can plug them into N64's 3-D environment starting March 6 for US$55.

Looking to Macs

♣ Mac games are getting more attention with the release of hybrid titles. **LucasLearning** of San Rafael, California streets a *Star Wars* title geared to gamers ages four and up on March 30. *Anakin's Speedway* for PC/Macs retails for US$19.95 and follows **LucasArt's** *Star Wars Episode I: Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars Episode I: Racer*, which respectively sold 224,015 and 151,366 units from January to November 1999.

♣ **Humongous Entertainment** of Woodinville, Washington continues producing Mac titles, shipping its latest *Pajama Sam* edutitle for PC and Mac. *Pajama Sam 3: You are What You Eat from Your Head to Your Feet* hits retail in April for US$24.99. The interactive superhero debuted in October 1996 with *Pajama Sam in No Need to Hide When it's Dark Outside*. Last year, Pajama Sam titles sold a total 134,065 units. (Unit sales figures courtesy of PC Data.)

Courting girls

♣ **THQ** of Calabasas, California is going after girl gamers for the first time with *Rugrats: Totally Angelica* for Game Boy Color. The sixth **Nickelodeon**-branded title from THQ targets girls ages six to 12 and streets in the spring for US$29.95. The title won't be pushed in boy-dominated gamer mags, but through cross promos with other *Rugrats* licensees like **Simon & Schuster**.


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Entertainment properties making their mark in a grocery store near you

BY ALLISON DUNFIELD

Push a cart through a grocery aisle these days and chances are you'll see more and more product with a kids entertainment property plunked firmly on the label. Licensors have taken notice of the food category as a means for increasing both the longevity and popularity of their properties. And, according to some licensing agents, this category, although small, is on the rise.

Universal Studios Consumer Products is one major U.S. player taking steps to grow its food and beverage licensing initiatives, says Torrie Dorrell, VP of licensing for the division. Dorrell says where Universal's licensing deals used to be mainly short-window promotions for film-based properties, the company is now looking to sign licensees for classic characters in categories like breakfast bars, cereals, cookies and bottled water—in short, anything that's available in the grocery store that has long-term shelf possibilities. The most recent example is a pancake mix and syrup by Vermont-based Bascom-Elray that sports Curious George, one of Universal's classic characters. Dorrell adds that food and beverage licensees have been especially interested in the upcoming *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas* flick. One of Universal's top priorities will be to grow this category, she says, because it has been relatively untapped for long-term licensing deals.



Clockwise from bottom left: Franco American powered-up pasta, a Teletubbies smorgasboard, Snoopy cheese and Curious George pancake products

Carole Francesca, president of Broad Street Licensing In New York, agrees. "[Food licensing] has become one of the biggest areas of opportunity I have seen in quite some time," she says, going on to predict that it has yet to plateau in the U.S.

Although no specific numbers are currently available, Nancy Bailey, president of Miami, Florida-based corporate licensing and consulting services Nancy Bailey & Associates, roughly calculates that entertainment property-branded food accounts for about six percent of the general State-side licensing market. However, if it includes the types of novelty confectionery that are sold at retailers like Toys 'R' Us, that figure could shoot up to 10%, according to Francesca.

In North America, core categories that are really working for kids properties are not the "healthy" ones. Candy, fruit snacks, frozen foods and cakes are all hot, says Francesca. Elie Dekel, Saban Consumer Products' executive VP of consumer products and promotions, agrees, saying licensees in the U.S. are doing a lot of candy and snack products that will add to kids entertainment value. In his opinion, food licensing in the U.S. has indeed grown "to some extent" in recent years.

In Europe, licensed foods are also doing well in some countries, particularly in the U.K. "It's grown enormously in the last three to four years," says Richard Hollis, department head of licensing at BBC Worldwide. "It's become more widely acceptable. People are much more used to buying character foods." Riccarda Kolb, spokesperson with Germany's EM.TV & Merchandising, says

EM.TV has seen a growth in this area, estimating it to be around five to seven percent of the general licensing market in Europe.

Branded food licensing falls into two categories, according to licensing agents—short-term food licensing, which is usually part of an overall promotional strategy, and long-term food licensing, which occurs when licensees create a foodstuff based on a popular character.



New colorful Jellabies gummies—designed just like the TV characters

Dekel says getting a character onto a fruit snack or yogurt is an important tool in being heard and noticed by kids above the constant media babble. "It speaks to a need to permeate a kid's lifestyle."

Saban has branched out of the traditional candy and snack food categories to more novel ones like pastas. After the success of canned *Power Rangers*- and *Mystic Knights*-shaped pasta by Franco American last year, Dekel says there are plans for *NASCAR Racers*-shaped pastas this year.

Saban has done character licensing on products that span many different grocery store shelves, another strategy to get kids tugging at parents' sleeves for branded products. The mix includes everything from cereals to a planned *Power Rangers* juice Dekel hopes will be a good competitor against the Snapples and Nesteas of the world. The main thing is to make a match that gives a property enough resonance to be on the shelf for several years, he says, or to round out a strategic promotional program by pairing packaging with sweepstakes.

Something to consider when moving into food licensing with your property is that the lead time for testing can be longer for new products in this category than in most others. Licensors must ask themselves if the property has the longevity to still be buzzing by the time the product hits shelves. The average time span from concept of a new branded food to shelf is around one year to 18 months (depending on the product) because of FDA testing and regulations. Just putting an entertainment brand on an existing label usually takes around three to six months.

Francesca notes that it's important to make sure the product really matches the character. One way to accomplish this is by picking foodstuffs that look visually similar to the property. Arriving at mass market mid-month, for example, is a new line of Jellabies candies by Toronto-based Trebor Allen (owned by worldwide food licensor Cadbury Schweppes) that are brightly colored like the characters in the show. Another way to make sure the property and the type of food are a good match is by sharing physical characteristics of the property. Mike Carlisle, president of Jellabies Canadian sub-licensing agent Telegenic Licensing, says it's likely Telegenic will also grant a gelatin license, partially because the characters in the show move like jiggly Jell-O.

Both Dekel and Francesca note that retailers will first and foremost want to have an established relationship with the food manufacturer before considering stocking licensed food. She adds that companies wanting to establish their properties as classic brands will go at food licensing more slowly and seriously, trying out one or two foods first and then extending the brand, so the property itself becomes synonymous with the food product.

In Europe, there are other factors to consider. Christian Maass, head of sales at MM Merchandising München, says shelf space in Europe is expensive because companies have to pay "listing fees" to launch new products and because unsuccessful products will be thrown off the shelves. Thus, pains must be taken to ensure the brand has enough longevity. Maass calls the development of branded kids foods "steady" at about one to three percent of the general licensing market in his country, saying he hasn't seen a real rise.

Jean-Michel Biard, president of V.I.P. Licensing in Paris, reports that entertainment-based food licensing is not on the increase in France, but says he hopes for a growth and agrees that it's "very strong in the U.K. and Germany." He estimates that entertainment property food licensing currently makes up about one to two percent of the licensing industry in France and adds that foods like dairy products do well. The categories that V.I.P. has entered into include milk, yogurt and ice cream. Recent licensees include Snoopy milk by France-based Orlait, and a Snoopy cheese product with Fromageries Bel/Babybel cheese.

Over in the U.K., the story is a little more appetizing. BBC Worldwide, the agent for Teletubbies in the U.K., has been stocking Teletubby foods since 1998. Kids can now enjoy Tubby Toast and pink Tubby Custard. Richard Hollis, department head of licensing, says because products like the four-pack of Tubby custard have sold in the millions, other types of products are coming out, including Teletubbies Fruit Snacks by U.K.-based Whitworths (available this month) and new Kinnerton Confectionery chocolate eggs and jellies for Easter. Most of the Teletubbies products licensed by BBC Worldwide have no additives or have additional vitamins, which is important to consumers and for maintaining the integrity of the brand, says Hollis. He says food now accounts for approximately 20% of the property's royalties in the U.K.

Hollis says in the U.K., like in the U.S., he has also seen a wider acceptance of other licensed foods. In his view, what was once limited to confectionery and birthday cakes is changing to a more well-rounded approach to food licensing.

Perhaps more popular in Europe and Asia than in the North American market are products like branded meats, cheeses and even eggs. Why the difference? According to many licensing companies, it simply comes down to different food culture.

"Food is a wonderful category to get into, but it is a frightening category. It can come back and explode in your face," says Francesca.

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C'est WHAT?

***KidScreen's* picks for the top three unusual or downright wacky licensed products this month are:**



1. Looney Tunes Chia Pets—**Joseph Enterprises**, San Francisco, California
2. Jellabies talking umbrellas (Do they include a weather forecast?)—**Kidz Toyz**, New York
3. Dairy Queen-branded collectible die-cast vehicles, including a 1946 Chevy—**Spec Cast**, Iowa

Thomas chugs into the nursery

Britt Allcroft is hoping to introduce Thomas to the crib set, launching a new line of Thomas products for infants and toddlers called My First Thomas in North America.

Aimed at newborns to two-year-olds, the range has a softer color palette and includes a line of bedding by New York-based Quiltex comprised of newborn apparel, towels, blankets and wall hangings, all of which will be on shelves by June.

Also on-board is Orlando, Florida-based ABC Development for a range of infant feeding products, bath accessories and stroller toys, which will also be available in June.

New York's Prestige Toys has signed to make a range of My First Thomas infant toys, including wrist and ankle rattles and soft musical toys. These products are slated to hit stores in October.

New York's Random House Children's Books is creating a range of My First books. The entire North American range is expected to be completed by spring 2001. AD

News in **Brief**

L&M quick hits



pat the bunny merch

★ **Golden Books** is gearing up for its little bunny's 60th anniversary this year with a range of *pat the bunny* products in North America. **Romar** of New York will make *pat the bunny*-themed infant accessories and diaper and tote bags, along with winter clothing accessories like hats, gloves, scarves and gift sets, all of which will be shipped by fourth quarter. Winter Park, Florida-based **ABC Development** is expanding the initial line of feeding products it launched in Q4 '99 to include new feeding sets, bottles, bags and pacifiers, which are shipping now in North America. Lastly, New York's **Eden** is creating new *pat* plush for 2000, including wrist rattles and musical pillows. These products will launch sometime this quarter.

BBC Worldwide also signed on **Dickens International**, based in Manchester, England, as master apparel licensee for the animated character featured in the 26 x five-minute series by the U.K.'s **Silver Fox Films**. A full range of product for U.K. shelves only is expected this spring.

★ **Discovery Enterprises Worldwide** announced a partnership with **Toys 'R' Us** to develop a collection of Animal Planet-branded toys to street in Q4 in the U.S. The product range includes playthings modeled after domestic, farm and wild animals. Toys 'R' Us will create an Animal Planet section in the stores to include plush, animatronic and PVC animals, board games and puzzles. The toys will sport humorous tags with thought bubbles, or will be posed in playful positions.

★ **BBC Worldwide** released two storybooks, an activity book and a video this month based on its new fall '99 property *Angelmouse*. New U.K.-based licensee **U.K. Imports** also released a plush line to coincide with the books and video launches.



★ To mark the Peanuts property's 50th anniversary, **United Media** has inked a deal with Texas-based **Play•By•Play** to make plush products for a Toy Fair debut, before launching across Europe in April. Due to creator Charles M. Schulz's retirement because of cancer, the last Peanuts cartoon appears early this month.



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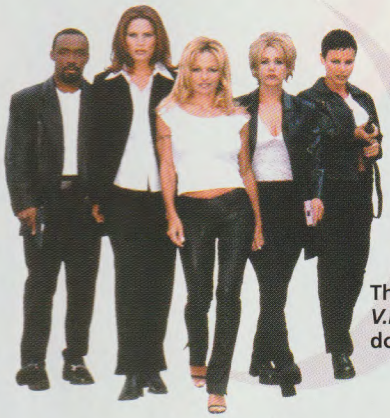
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Campy *V.I.P.* launches dolls to match

Sony Signatures is leading off its *V.I.P.* licensing program with a line of fashion dolls modeled after the kick-butt chicks on the show, including Pamela Anderson Lee and the Vallery Irons Protection crew. Play Along of Ft. Lauderdale is creating the line, which will debut at Toy Fair and ship in fall 2000. Peter Dang, executive VP of worldwide licensing, merchandising and consumer products at Sony Signatures, says the licensing program waited until the show's popularity grew, so the dolls are the first real licensing kick-off, although during the series' first season, calendars and posters aimed at tween and teen girls were available.



The cast of *V.I.P.*—real dolls

Dang says that while *V.I.P.*' s audience is made up of all ages—including men and kids under 12—Sony Signatures is focusing on teen and tween girls because the series is a model for how girls can take care of themselves, in keeping with the "girl power" mantra.

The Barbie-style dolls will feature moveable limbs, but clothing and accessories won't be available initially. Attire will mimic the California duds seen in the show, with a humorous twist. "The whole series, we're just so tongue-in-cheek about the fashion," Dang says.

Montreal-based vid game studio Ubi Soft is developing a console game based on the show's action-based premise, and the digital title is slated for a possible E3 debut. Licensees in categories like apparel and shoes are being sought, and promotions such as mall tours with Anderson Lee are also in the works. **AD**

SPORTS SIGNINGS SCORE!!!

Little League looks to Sloan to hit one out of the park

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

Pennsylvania-based youth sports organization Little League Baseball has enlisted the services of licensing and marketing agency SloanVision of New York to help kick-start its licensing program. SV will focus on developing merch programs around Little League logos and proprietary characters, like Dugout, primarily in off-field categories like toy, interactive, apparel, footwear and confectionery. SloanVision agent Philip Wachtler says he will review current LL licensees before signing any new companies, but he expects to have new licensed product in stores by Q4. Last year, according to Wachtler, LL merch pulled in US$15 million in retail sales. Currently, 150 million kids under the age of 12 play in Little League softball and baseball leagues in the U.S. Internationally, LL leagues operate in over 100 countries.



Dugout, the Little League mascot pitches his own line of merch

NASCAR puts Manley in driver's seat

Racing outfit NASCAR has licensed California toyco Manley Toy Quest to develop and market NASCAR-branded walkie talkies (US$9.99), role play sets (US$9.99) and electronic handhelds (US$14.99). The merch, which Manley will preview at Toy Fair this month, is slated to hit stores in April.

Crazy bones to sport Dragonball Z



Toy Craze is spicing up its product line of Crazy Bones characters by signing a deal with Fort Worth, Texas-based Funimation for *Dragonball Z* merch, slated to hit shelves by late March.

William Flaherty, president of Toy Craze, says the license was attractive partially because the series has a story line (as opposed to being episodic), providing more opportunities for a variety of Crazy Bones. The first edition will be comprised of 40 characters, building to about 120, and there is also talk of a possible *Dragonball Z* starter kit.

Last year, Disney entered into a licensing agreement with Toy Craze for production of *Toy Story 2* characters—its first series of licensed characters. Twenty of them came out just after the film's launch in November, and talks are underway for special *Toy Story 2* storage containers.

Prior to the *Toy Story 2* agreement, there was a tentative deal with Nintendo for *Pokémon* Crazy Bones characters back in July, but it was dashed. "For a variety of reasons we decided to part ways," says Flaherty.

He explains that the company's main goal is still to concentrate on building the Crazy Bones franchise itself, and, aside from a few key licenses (Flaherty says he is interested in the *Harry Potter* property, but nothing has materialized yet), Toy Craze will stick with coming out with its own unique characters. New lines of Aliens and 58 new Buddies will launch at retail this year. As well, a Crazy Bones board game from Indiana, Indianapolis-based Warren Industries will debut this quarter, along with handheld games from MGA Entertainment of North Hills, California and a collectors guide from Scholastic. New Jersey-based Rose Art will be making pencils, pencil toppers and collector cases.

Flaherty isn't worried about all the shelf space that's currently being hogged by Pokémon products. "I don't know how much longer the Pokémon thing will last, but it doesn't mean there's not a piece of the pie for Crazy Bones." **AD**

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Kid Think Inc. WHAT TODAY'S KIDS ARE THINKING

Recipe for live-action success: Make it funny

This month, LiveWire spoke with a panel of kids ages eight to 12 about their TV viewing preferences. Boys and girls both average over four hours of tube time a day, and the majority of girls prefer live-action shows (boys prefer cartoons). We asked the girls and boys to explain which live-action TV shows are their favorites and why.

What we found:

Funny shows take the cake

Half of the kids on our panel like their favorite live-action show because it delivers a very important component—humor. After humor, action and special effects were other popular components. The comedy *Kenan and Kel* tops both boys' and girls' lists, followed distantly by *All That*. Boys and girls then diverged in their choices with boys selecting action shows like *Walker Texas Ranger*, *Power Rangers* and *Animorphs*. Girls chose dramas and comedies with strong, young, female leads, such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. The majority of kids watch their favorite TV show three times a week or more.

The perfect TV show

Girls prefer shows with a mix of comedy and drama, while boys overwhelmingly prefer straight comedy. Over half of the kids feel it is important to relate to the lead characters in shows, and an equal number feel that shows should teach something or send a positive message. Over half of the boys and girls cited music and fashion as important elements in a show, and most specified that a show's music is more important than fashion. Dewayne from California, age 10, explained why both music and fashion are important: "I like when shows have good music. Then I want to buy the CDs. If the clothes are tight [cool], everyone wants to get them." Unlike music and fashion, fewer than half of kids felt that the setting of a show is important. Those who did feel the show setting is important said that the setting must be believable.



Boys go for straight comedy like *Kenan and Kel* (top), while girls prefer drama/comedy mixes like *Buffy*.

What kids said:

When asked to create their own shows, almost three-quarters of our panelists dreamed up shows about kids. More than one-third of boys and girls said that their shows would be funny, while an equal number of boys created action/adventure shows. More than one-third of boys and one-quarter of girls created shows that would be educational in some way or carry a message about the challenges of real life.

"It would be about things pre-teens go through, like being popular and unpopular and things like that. The show would be exciting, dull and sad—just like life." **Josh, 12, Nevada**

"It would be about teaching and helping kids with special needs. It would take place in school and on field trips and would star celebrities like Britney Spears." **Amber, 8, Georgia**

"My characters would be easy to relate to, have awesome taste in music, dancing. Kids would always learn something, but at the same time have fun. They would be witty, a little sarcastic, but definitely funny and pretty good-looking—but not like a lot of those fake-looking people on most TV shows." **Anthony, 9, Ontario**

"It would be a quiz show for kids, where the kids would have easy questions and make money. It would take place in Orlando, so I could take my family to Walt Disney World, and it would star Kenan and Kel." **Allison, 9, Pennsylvania**

No real fall debut standouts—yet

No clear favorites jumped out from the lineup of new fall series: In fact the top answer for boys was that they do not have a favorite new show. Of the boys who do have a favorite, more voted for *100 Deeds for Eddie McDowd* than any other debut. Girls' votes were all over the place, with *Odd Man Out* emerging as most popular newbie by a nose. Boys most often picked their favorite new show "because it is exciting," followed closely by "because it is funny." Girls explained that their favorite shows are the ones that have kids in them and seem "real," followed by those that are funny. Commercials and friends were the sources named most often for learning about new shows.



Boys' fave newbie is *100 Deeds for Eddie McDowd*

Next month: Collectamania! Trading card games are more popular than ever before: Kid Think finds out why.

LIVEWIRE TODAY'S FAMILIES ONLINE

Kid Think Inc., a youth marketing consulting group, investigates a wide range of issues in kids' lives. Kid Think talks with kids via LiveWire: Today's Families Online, a proprietary panel of more than 1,100 on-line families across the United States. Both Kid Think and LiveWire are divisions of Griffin Bacal, a New York-based communications agency specializing in the youth and family markets. If you have any questions or subjects you would like Kid Think to cover, call Paul Kurnit at 212-415-2992 or e-mail livewire@gbinc.com.



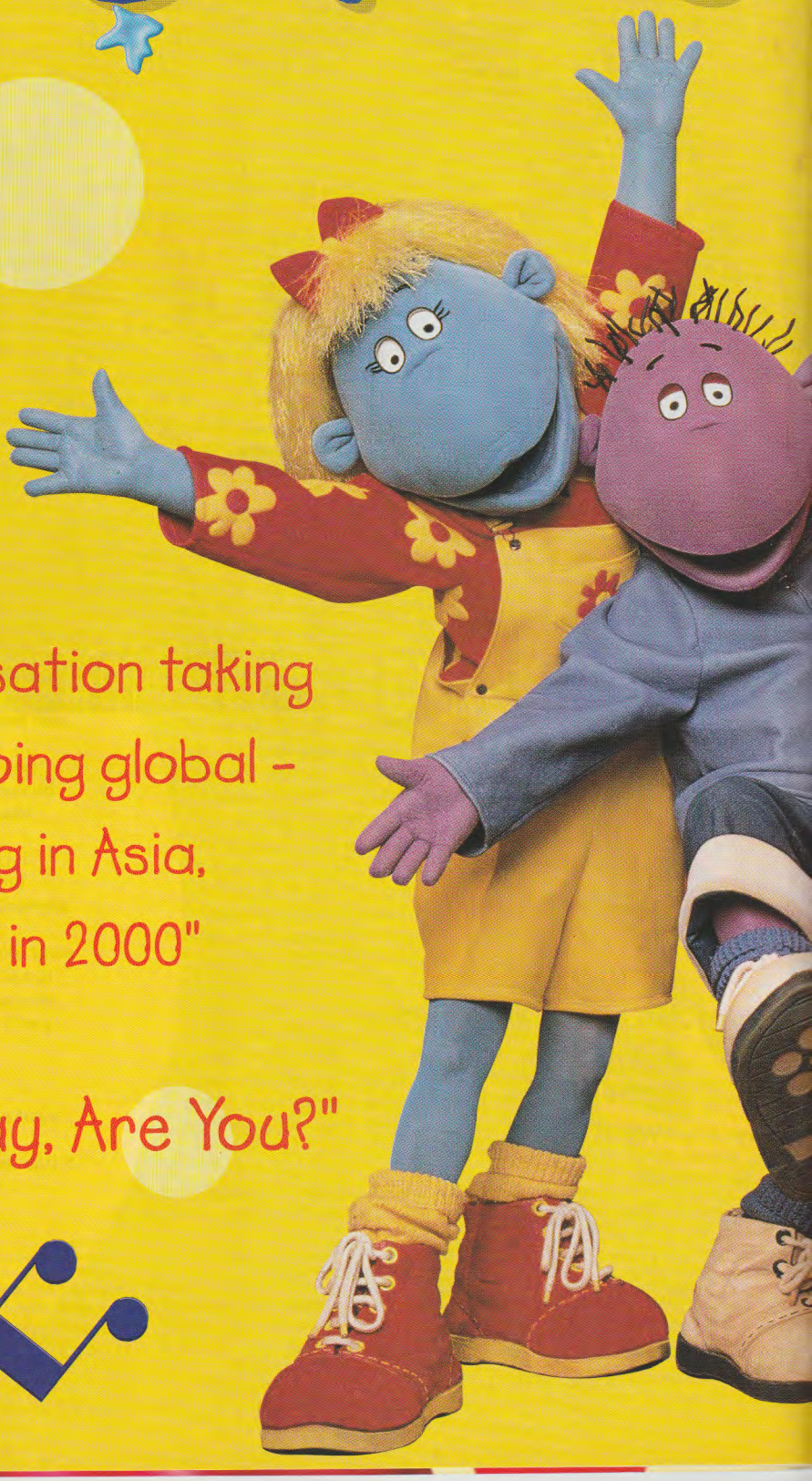
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SPFE cuts into kid market with *Max Steel* campaign

BY KATE BARKER



Sony Pictures Family Entertainment is taking off the gloves for a multi-million-dollar, multilevel campaign pushing this month's launch of high-tech 3-D CGI series *Max Steel*. The three-pronged assault will attempt to build grassroots buzz with a teaser Web site, and then hit kids over the head with about 12 spots on Kids' WB! and a massive retail campaign tying in all major toy retail chains in the U.S.

SPFE's VP of marketing David Palmer says the campaign will focus on the distinctive, highly rendered 3-D CGI look of the series, as well as highlighting *Max Steel*'s nonstop action and extreme sports attitude.

Master toy Mattel will head up the retail campaign, which launches in spring with in-store promos hitting Target, KB Toys, Wal-Mart, Kmart and Toys 'R' Us. Toys launched last month.

The Target promo includes a *Max Steel* figure packaged with a free video of the first TV episode (SRP US$16), while at KB Toys, an exclusive *Max Steel* comic is available with the purchase of any *Max Steel* figure or vehicle (SRP from US$9 to US$10). The promo marks the North American debut of the 16-page comic book, produced by DIC Comics-owned Wildstorm Comics. Available merch includes a *Max Steel* Jet, retailing for between US$29.99 and US$31.99, with more figures and vehicles to follow.

The on-air campaign will run through the third week of March and feature a pool of 10-, 20- and 30-second spots building on a 10-second teaser that aired last month. Dave Doré, co-VP of Kids' WB! marketing, says the spots will center on teenage lead Max and his nanotechnology-fueled superhuman abilities.

Web site www.maxsteeltv.com launched last month with an eye on building underground buzz and will be updated weekly. All three initiatives are geared to boys ages six to 11, the series' target demo.

Additional licensees include Farmingdale, New York-based Rand for sporting goods, Gem for master apparel, Thermos for hard and soft lunch kits, Buster Brown for children's footwear and Disguise for Halloween costumes. Julie Boylan, VP of sales and retail for Sony Pictures Consumer Products, says the licensing push will expand beyond core products this fall.

Promo continued from page 30

an advantage most indies admittedly don't have. Since *Rainbow Fish* existed as a Sony video property prior to production of the series, now video titles will announce the launch of the show, both through on-pack visual bursts and couponing inside. *Mega Babies* will also benefit from subsidiary support, says Cappel, through tie-ins including an undisclosed deal with Sony Electronics.

Companies that do not have a helping hand from a parent company may be forced to increase their staff in order to fully support marketing efforts. Until the hiring of Newhouse-Calcaterra and Irene Weibel as marketing VPs of the newly formed corporate sponsorship division, Nelvana did not even have a west coast marketing presence. Notes Newhouse-Calcaterra: "We made a strong, concerted effort to bump up marketing of our programs. Marketing, promotions, PR—it's all a part of it; the networks are busy, and their own budgets are being cut all the time. This can force companies to staff up entire departments to solely support the networks."

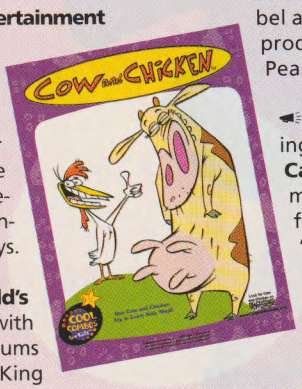
All in all, no stone can be left unturned. Concludes Loris Kramer: "We're fully supporting the launch of *Mega Babies* in the U.S. [As an indie producer], you've got to bring the viewers. You're competing against broadcasters, as well as the Web, video games, soccer..." It's an environment in which achieving high visibility is clearly the only way to be seen at all.

News in **Brief**

After a successful run at Burger King last year, **itsy bitsy Entertainment** has signed up for a second *Teletubbies* QSR promo, this time with rival **McDonald's**. The "Teletubbies Hugs" kids meal deal marks the third time a property has sneaked through the live-action loophole in the 10-year exclusivity agreement the burger giant signed with Disney in 1997 (Saban's *Power Rangers* and *Mystic Knights* were first). The promo will take place in the early part of the year and includes premium giveaways with Happy Meals, advertising support and cross-couponing with Hasbro pushing Munch and Slurp Teletubbies toys.

Fox Family/Saban will continue to hook up with **McDonald's** for Happy Meal promotions. The next promo will go all out with over 20 different *Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue* premiums hitting kids meals in May. Fox will follow this with a Burger King QSR promo pushing anime newbie *Digimon*.

Skippy peanut butter is the latest to partner up with **United Media** for its Peanuts 50th anniversary. A sweeps will mark a back-to-school promo set for fall 2000, and Snoopy will appear on Skippy labels with the tag "The Official Peanut Butter Sandwich of the Peanuts Gang." An earlier Skippy tie-in kicked off last month with a national FSI hitting about 40 million homes and a label appearance by Snoopy. Three regional bread brands produced by Bestfoods are also tying in as part of the Peanuts official PB sandwich.



Splattered chickens are just one of the treats awaiting kids in a *Cow and Chicken* QSR promo hitting 4,000 **Carl's Jr.** and **Hardee's** restaurants across the U.S. this month. **Cartoon Network** is partnering up with the food chains to offer about 3.5 million premiums with "Cool combos for kids" meals from February 16 through March 28. Toys include "Evil-Cownevil" cannons and "Watch out for that chicken" wind-up cars (featuring the Red Guy running down Chicken). In-store and on-line ads will support.

Levi Strauss plans to leverage an existing relationship with the **WB**'s *Roswell* to launch new brand Lot 53 next spring. Building on an existing *Roswell* product placement agreement, Levi Strauss will use the cast in upcoming print campaigns and an on-air campaign to air on the WB. Warner Bros. Online will support.

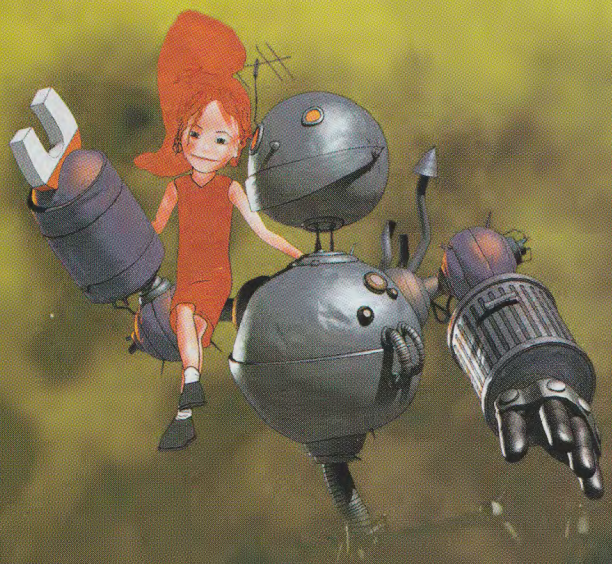
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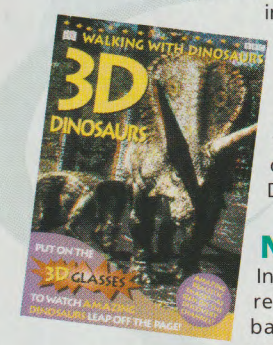
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DK goes prehistoric

Dorling Kindersley has inked a deal with **BBC Worldwide**, granting it the exclusive publishing rights to create titles based on the **BBC/Discovery Channel**-produced documentary *Walking With Dinosaurs*. DK will produce three kids titles, including a photo book, a sticker book and a 3-D poster book. All the titles are slated to ship to retail in early April, well in time for the U.S. broadcast of the three-hour documentary, which airs on Discovery Channel on April 16.



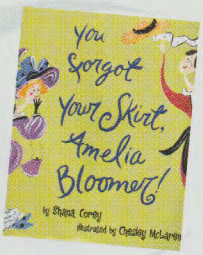
New series

In March, **Disney Press** will release the first two titles based on the live-action supernatural tweens show *So Weird*, which currently airs nightly from Friday to Sunday on the **Disney Channel**. DP will offer the first two books (*Family Reunion* and *Sacrifice*, US$4.99 each) to retailers in a mix 12-copy display, and plans to promote the books on its site at disneybooks.com. The third *SW* title, *Escape*, is slated to hit stores in May.



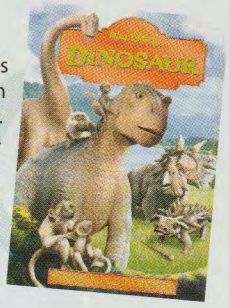
In time for Women's History Month

Fashion as social protest is the theme of **Scholastic**'s *You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!* (US$16.95), an illustrated biography by Shana Corey about a nineteenth-century suffragette who skirted the sartorial conventions that male society dictated by wearing her bloomers out in public instead of a skirt. Scholastic will release *Amelia* to stores in March, along with free postcards featuring the book's cover art for public distribution.



Disney digs *Dinosaurs*

Disney Press will have a wide selection of *Dinosaur* titles at the ready by the time its parent company's CGI-laden pic of the same name charges into theaters this May. In all, DP will offer 11 titles, including pull-a-page, lift-the-flap, animated flip, trading card, junior novel and story books. Retailers can order the titles, which range in price from US$5 to US$35, individually or in a 45-copy mix *Dinosaur* display. Disney will be running in-theater cross-promotions featuring the books, and will promote the titles on-line at www.disneybooks.com.



Shelf Talk

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

Toy Vault lands *Farscape* toys

California-based Toy Vault is developing toys based on *Farscape*, the Jim Henson-produced live-action sci-fi program that currently airs on the Sci Fi Channel in the U.S. Toy Vault will develop two lines of action figures modeled on peripatetic astronaut John Crichton, as well as other show characters, for mass (US$9.95 each) and for specialty retailers (US$12.95 each). In addition to the figures, which TV will preview at Toy Fair this month, the company will also be creating separate lines of *Farscape* figural key chains. Toy Vault is planning to cross-promote its toys, which it will release to stores in September, with fellow *Farscape* licensee Rittenhouse Archives, producer of the *Farscape* trading cards. Packaging on each company's product will feature ads promoting the other's merchandise, and both TV and RA's Web sites will post links, referring consumers back to the other's site.

Retro toys for retro flicks

Macabre toy specialist McFarlane Toys is adding two new items to its Movie Maniacs line. The Tempe, Arizona-based company has been granted a license from Twentieth Century Fox to create action figures based on the lead characters from theatrical pics *Edward Scissorhands* and *The Fly*. The fully articulated figures for *Edward* and *The Fly* will stand seven inches high and will retail for between US$8 to US$10. McFarlane will preview prototypes of the dolls at Toy Fair this month, and plans to release both at retail in August.



Farscape

Pokémon paraphernalia

According to a published report in gamezine *Scrye*, Japanese Pokémon card producer Creatures will release cards featuring 100 new Pokémon characters this year, and will also include gold and silver cards in both its starter and booster packs. The same report goes on to say that the new Pokémon will be assigned a specific sex, will be able to breed and will include younger versions of existing characters—such as the young Pikachu, called Piku.



Jenny Bendal, a spokesperson for the U.S. Pokémon card licensee Wizards of the Coast, would not confirm the number of new characters that Wizards will incorporate into its cards, nor whether any of its packs will include gold or silver cards. Bendal did say, however, that Wizards' Team Rocket Expansion Cards, which will be available in both booster (US$3.29 each) and preconstructed theme decks (US$9.99 each) this April, will feature several new characters. This month, Wizards will release new versions of the Pokémon Base set, which will include 130 cards, for both booster and starter decks.



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Kmart blasts off with new Power Rangers apparel program

Retailer: Kmart
Promotion: *Power Rangers: Lightspeed Rescue* Apparel-and-Premium Program
Number of Participating Stores: 2,151
Length of Promotion: One month

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

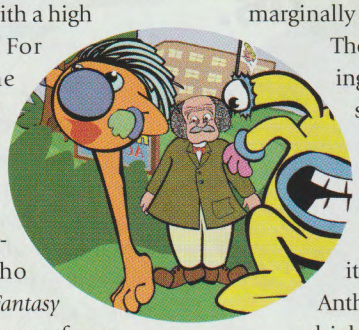
From March 26 to May 1, Kmart will run an exclusive boys apparel program for Saban's *Power Rangers* property. The program, which ties in with *Power Rangers: Lightspeed Rescue*, the seventh season for the *PR* franchise that begins on Fox Kids Network February 14, will encompass four lines: boys sets (Jamat), sleepwear (PCA & AME), T-shirts (Freeze Kids and Jamat) and underwear (Fruit of the Loom).

As part of the promotion, each item of clothing will come with one of four mini *Power Rangers* premiums attached, including a mini *PR* finger board from Bandai with the T-shirts; a transforming toothbrush by MAS with the boys sets; a mini activity book from Dalmation Press with the underwear; and a yo-yo by Bandai with the sleepwear.

In the third week of March, Kmart will run ads in support of the *Lightspeed* apparel program in its monthly circular, to be distributed in major dailies in the U.S. The chain will also feature in-store signage promoting the program in each of its locations.

Rumpus continued from page 42

and can be viewed by downloading a Shockwave 4.0 plug-in. Most cartoons are about three to five minutes in length and feature educational content with a high degree of interactivity. For instance, in one of the episodes, starring the Science Freaks, the toy characters get lost as they're walking to school. Along the way, one of the toys, the limb-challenged Foothead (who sounds like Tattoo from *Fantasy Island*) learns about compasses from his creator/mentor Dr. Freakenstein. Soon after Foothead's lesson, a screen pops up offering viewers the option of either learning the steps involved to create a home-made compass or continuing with the main narrative.


Rumpus Toys' Foothead

"We think it's better than children's television because there's no set schedule, and there aren't a thousand commercials to deal with," says Roda.

While the Net's interactive capabilities are impressive, the ability of Web programming to drive sales of product remains largely unknown. Furthermore, whereas the Web may offer Rumpus unlimited access to showcase its programming, producing that content isn't cheap. The cartoons Rumpus created for its site, according to Roda, cost between US$5,000 to US$10,000 per minute. Compared to the cost of a Rumpus Toys commercial that ran for two days on a cable affiliate in the Pittsburgh area last December, producing the animation works out to be only marginally cheaper, says Roda.

There's also the challenge of trying to attract an audience to the site. Roda wouldn't divulge the number of hits rumpus.com receives, adding only that the site's traffic had increased significantly since it started offering the cartoons. Anthony Adorno of Media Metrix, which measures site traffic, says Rumpus didn't appear in its most recent report, published in November. Web sites don't generally register on Media Metrix's radar until they draw a minimum of 100,000 unique visitors per month.

Because Rumpus doesn't have the funds to do a lot of off-line advertising, Roda says the company is relying chiefly on its toys' on-pack pitches to direct kids to the site, links with kids educational site MaMaMedia, and plenty of word-of-mouth ploys to raise awareness. Once Rumpus gets kids to come to the site, Roda says it tries aggressively to keep them coming back. After kids sign up with its kids club, Rumpus sends them a toy, wallet and novelty book for free. The site also allows kids to play games and send e-cards to their friends for free.

But does the kind of programming and the promo goodies Rumpus offers have any currency with retailers? Not necessarily. "I wouldn't say we would be more inclined to purchase product from a company based solely on the entertainment they offer via their Web site, but to the extent that it complements the company's overall marketing strategy, we might give it some more consideration," says John Reilly, a spokesperson with KB Toys.

While Roda is confident the toons will make its toys more palatable to consumers and, by extension, store buyers, he also believes they will help up Rumpus's on-line sales. Currently, Rumpus sells its entire line on-line, and in April, with Herschel Hopper, the company will try selling its first Web exclusive toy. In a bid to increase orders for the movie, Rumpus will offer consumers the doll for US$12 and will include the movie *New York Rabbit* for free, or shoppers can order the movie seperately for US$3.

"With Hershel, we wanted to add an element of exclusivity to the toy, and see how it plays out. It's very experimental for us at this point," says Roda.

Notwithstanding all of the Web programming Rumpus is creating for its toys, the company isn't giving up on old media altogether. According to Roda, Rumpus recently signed on with Hollywood talent agency CAA, which is currently pitching co-pro partners on developing TV shows around its toys, such as *Eggles* and *Monsters in My Closet*.

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Beanies Y2K compliant after all

The phones worked, the computers didn't crash and the Beanies still existed. After announcing six months earlier that it would cease production on all Beanie Babies as of January 1, Ty rescinded the death warrant when thousands of the toy's supporters voted overwhelmingly to keep Beanies alive.

Last December, in what could be interpreted as the craftiest ploy in demand manipulation that a toyco has ever undertaken, Ty decided to place the Beanies' fate in the hands of consumers by holding a vote on its site. Over 200,000 people paid US$0.50 each to cast their ballot, according to Mary Beth Sobolewski, editor of *Mary Beth's Bean Bag Monthly*. (Ty reportedly donated all the voting fees to charity.) On January 2, Ty posted the results of the Beanie referendum, which found that—are you sitting down?—91% of participants wanted the Oak Brook, Illinois-based toyco to continue Beanie production.

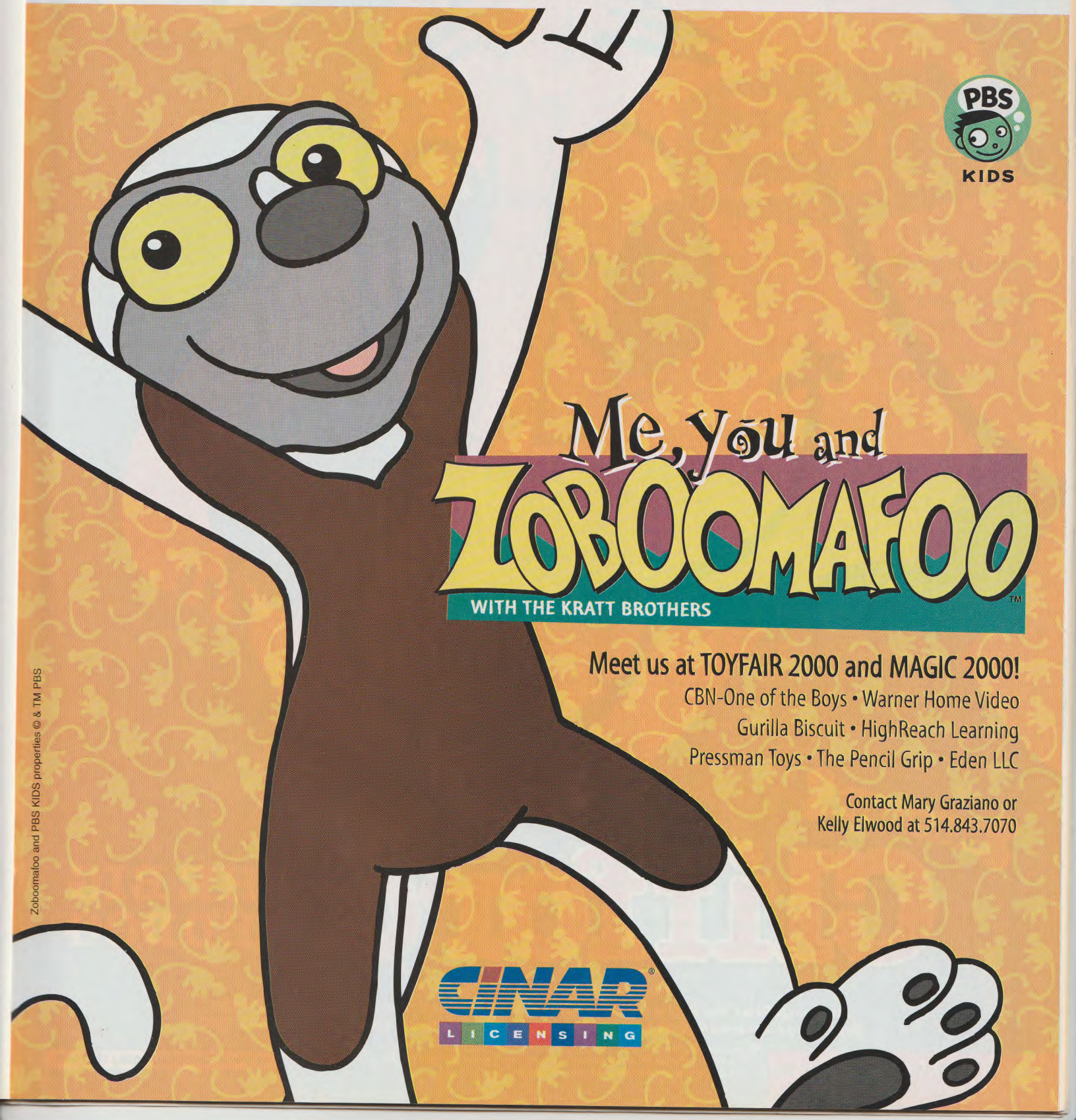
In addition to the news, Ty also announced on its site that it would be adding three new larger sizes to its Beanie Buddies line and would also introduce a line of Beanies for infants called Baby Ty. Ty began showing the new Beanie product at gift and toy trade shows last month. At press time, Ty had yet to issue a retail release date for either the new buddies or Baby Ty items. SA

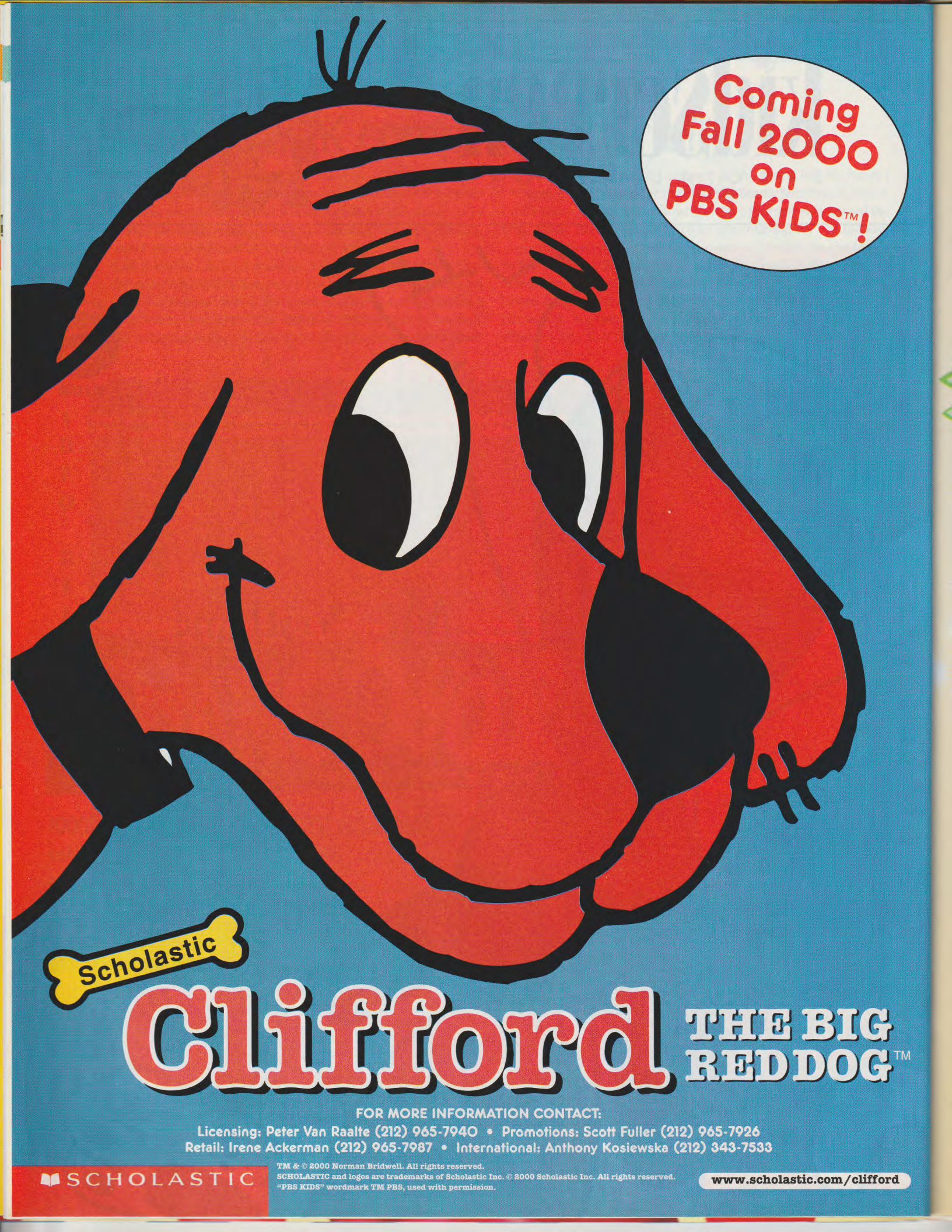
VIDEO RELEASES

Prebook & Street Date	Price	Synopsis	Advertising	Promotional & Licensing Partners	Retailer Support
Pokémon: The First Movie • **Studio:** 4Kids Entertainment/Shogakukan • **Distributor:** Warner Home Video					
Feb. 22; March 21	US$26.98 (VHS or DVD)	The US$87 million-grossing *First Movie* arrives on home video with added content and features. Both VHS and DVD versions include the mini movie *Pikachu's Vacation*, plus a preview of *Pokémon: The Second Movie, The Story of Mewtwo's Origin*. The DVD also features commentary from the movie's director.	Print (*Beckett Pokémon Collector*, *Contact Kids*, *Crayola Kids*, *DC Comics*, *Disney Adventures*, *People*); TV (ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, WB); Radio (Radio Disney); Internet (AOL); in-school (Warner will advertise the launch on four million lunch menus); in-store (ads will appear in 2,200 grocery stores across the U.S.)	Tie-in partners: Kraft, Clorox, Zenith, Wizards of the Coast, Atlantic Records, Kids WB! and an as-yet-unnamed QSR. WHV Golden Ticket Contest for trips to Japan and a US$1,000 shopping spree at the Pokémon Center in Tokyo, a first-edition starter set of Team Rocket game cards and a meeting with Pokémon creator, Mr. Ishihara. Each HV package will include one exclusive Pokémon card	P.O.P. packages include Pokémon buttons, window clings, counter cards, posters and character danglers. WHV will coordinate a retail-only display contest, with prize offers of Zenith TV sets and DVD players
Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace • **Studio:** Lucasfilm • **Distributor:** Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment (TCFHE)					
Feb. 16; April 4	US$24.98	Anakin and the gang will hit video in a pan-and-scan format, as well as a wide-screen video collector's edition (US$39.98) which includes behind-the-scenes doc and a 48-page exclusive book.	TCFHE is assembling an ad blitz that will cover all major TV, print, radio and on-line venues	Both VHS versions of *Phantom* will come with a booklet offering rebates and savings worth US$70 from the following promo and licensing partners: Frito-Lay, Pepsi, Hasbro, Lego, Scholastic, Lucas Learning and Lucas Arts.	Various *Phantom* P.O.P., including posters, shelftalkers and standees
George and Martha: Best Friends • **Studio**: Nelvana • **Distributor**: Sony Wonder					
Feb. 18; March 7	US$9.98	The latest release in SW's Doors of Wonder series features four George and Martha eps.	On-screen (Loews/Cineplex theaters will run spots for the video at 450 of its U.S. locations); on-line (sonywonder.com)	Each video will contain booklet of savings and discounts from Commodore Cruise Lines	Doors of Wonder mix prepacks, header cards and various P.O.P. materials are available
Switching Goals • **Studio:** DualStar Video • **Distributor:** Warner Home Video					
March 7; April 14	US$19.96	Perennial preteens Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen ditch shopping at the mall for more sporting pursuits in this full-length soccer flick that first aired on Disney Channel last December.	TV (ABC, NBC, Kids' WB!, FOX, Fox Family, Nick, Cartoon); Print (*Parenting*, *Nickelodeon*, *Disney Adventures*, *Sports Illustrated for Kids* and *Family Fun*); Internet (yow.com, nick.com, marykateandashley.com, mamamedia.com, cyberkids.com, freezone.com); In-School (book covers distributed nationally to grades two to four)	Soccer Camp Sweepstakes will offer consumers free trips to Nike-sponsored soccer camps; other prizes include free one-year subscriptions to *SI for Kids* and *SI for Women*. Mattel will offer rebates on its Mary-Kate and Ashley dolls, plus US$5 rebates on *Switching Goals* videos	Various sizes of merchandisers and theater-size *Switching Goals* posters available

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SPECIAL REPORT
Toy Fair 2000





FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Licensing: Peter Van Raalte (212) 965-7940 • Promotions: Scott Fuller (212) 965-7926
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Here's the scoop: High-tech is hot, anime is all-pervasive and licensing is picking itself off the floor.

See amazing toys that chatter, interact and evolve in "High-tech couplings" (below) as toycos scramble to hook up with the likes of Microsoft and Intel to avoid being left behind. Then, a closer look at the licensing biz: "Entertainment licensing" (page 68) reveals that the rumors about the demise of licensing are greatly exaggerated. Finally, "Anime tsunami" (page 72) gets the lowdown on the latest category to take Toy Fair by storm.

Also in this report:
Eurotoys fight U.S. invasion…**page 75**
Croc hunters and other cool new toys…**page 76**
The market the toycos missed…**page 79**

High-tech couplings spawn brave new toy wave

BY ALLISON DUNFIELD

Amid the rows of dolls, action figures and vehicles lining the booths at Toy Fair, a new breed of high-tech toys is emerging. Evidenced by the buzz over Intel Play last year, along with healthy sales for the QX3 Computer Microscope and Me2Cam over the holidays, these are the toys that are getting noticed both on the showroom floor and on shelves.

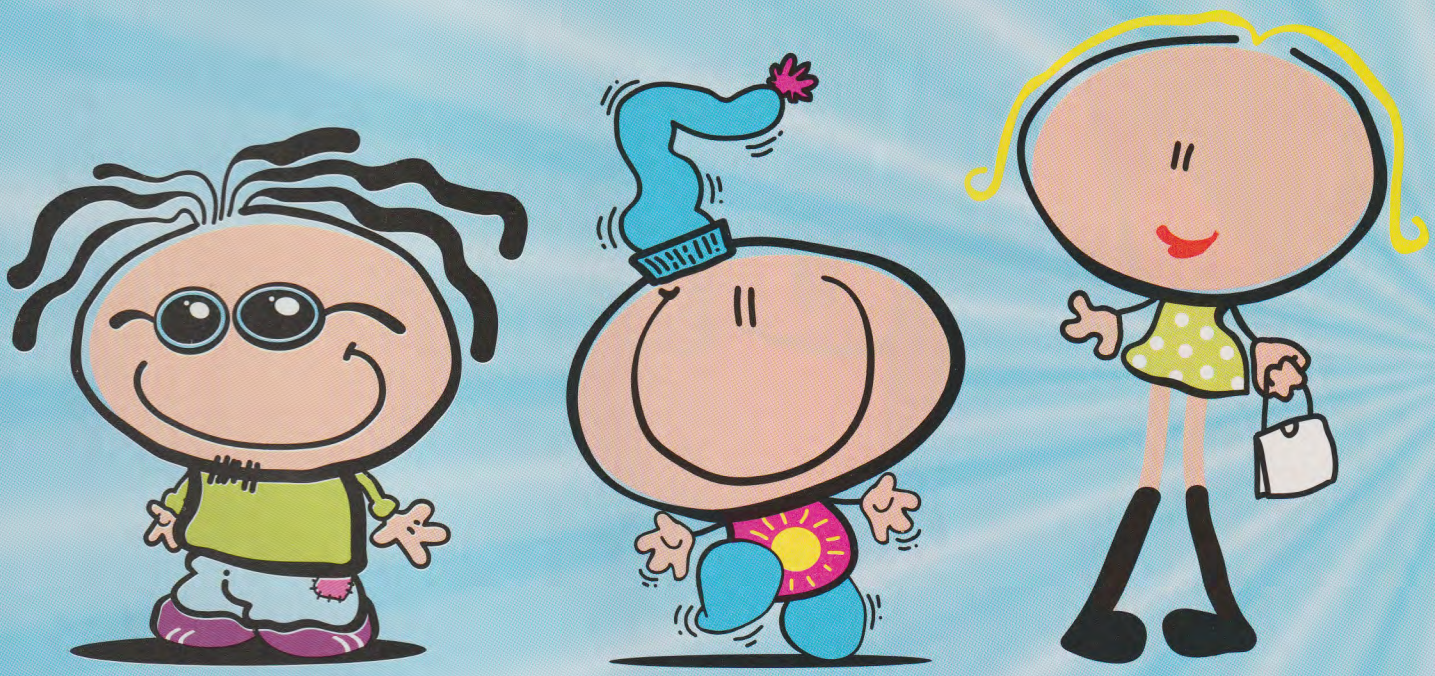
Now, at the dawn of a new millennium, traditional toycos are clamoring to make alignments with technology and even bio-engineering firms to produce toys that push the boundaries of junior high-tech. Such toys can take a bewildering variety of forms, but a common goal is the development of a toy that can be considered "smart." These are toys that can "learn" from children through play, or can change into a virtually different toy every day by downloading information from a CD-ROM or the Internet.

"Downloadability is a really sexy new thing," says Dr. Erik Strommen, program manager for research and content at Microsoft's Interactive Toy Group, which was formed after the former Actimates Division was disbanded (Microsoft is now partnering with individual toy companies and co-branding its toy products). By downloadability, Strommen says he's referring to toys that can download information from a CD-ROM, the Internet or a television source and thus change their own behavior, in effect creating a new toy every time kids play.

Bandai America has aligned itself with Microsoft to make this happen with a new line of Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue toys. The toys are based on the series debuting this month on Fox Kids, and some use technology allowing them to be "new" every day.

High-tech continued on page **66**

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High-tech continued from page 63

One such toy is a high-tech update of the existing MegaZord. A MegaZord is made up of individual Zords, which are the Power Rangers' vehicles, and the new MegaZord robot (which can be taken apart to make five Zord vehicles) will be able to move, speak and interact with the TV. The MegaZord includes a base station, a VCR cable and an AC adapter. When the robot sits in the base station "watching" the new Fox series, it can receive messages sent via non-visible television signals that add movements and phrases to the robot's repertoire. "It will say and do things it wasn't able to prior to the episode," says Brian Goldner, executive VP and COO of Bandai America. The toy is expected to hit shelves July in North America, with plans to introduce it to other Fox Kids territories at a later date. Each enhanced MegaZord will retail for about US$59.99.

The second toy resulting from the Microsoft alliance, the Mega DataZord, is like a virtual MegaZord. Kids will be able to buy individual Power Rangers figures packaged with corresponding CD-ROM Zords, and when they have three or more and download the information from the CD-ROMs onto a PC, they can make a Mega DataZord. Even if they don't collect three or more, Bandai says the CD-ROMs in the first wave have been programmed to automatically enable the Mega DataZord mode by October 31, 2000 anyway. The DataZords will hit North American shelves in the fall with a US$9.99 SRP for each figure/CD-ROM pack.



eSpecially My Barney can download your kid's stats

Downloadability is also the main focus of a new 12-inch interactive Barney plush from Hasbro called eSpecially My Barney. Available fall 2000 for a US$49.99 SRP, the toy will have PC plug-in capabilities allowing parents to visit the Barney.com Web site and download information enabling the plush to interact with each kid in a unique way. For example, parents can "teach" the babbling Barney their child's name, birthday and favorite type of nursery rhymes. "The mom will be able to provide the child with a new play experience every day," says Lorrie Browning, VP of marketing for licensed brands.

The unique thing about this and other download-friendly toys is that they can be taken and played with away from the computer, which is a definite trend, according to Strommen.

High-tech for kids is also increasingly copying adult communication technology to create toys that allow kids to pass information to each other.

Hasbro has created a pager-like toy for girls ages six and up called Talkin'acha (SRP US$29.99), set to street this September. The toy lets kids send messages to friends using wireless voice messaging technology. Girls can record an eight-second message and can either transmit it to a friend's communicator remotely or pass the message to another Talkin'acha user by physically touching the recipient. Kids can also store messages on Buzz Cards (SRP US$6.99 for a package of two), which can be removed and passed on to friends.



Talkin'acha transfers messages with a touch

Grabbing onto the coattails of Intel Play's Me2Cam, Tiger Electronics is coming out with Net-Cam (SRP US$59) this summer. The Net-Cam is your basic digital camera with a couple of high-tech enhancements. It can be used for security, that is, placed on a child's computer where it takes pictures of anyone passing in front of the infrared sensor, or it can take pictures in pitch darkness using infrared technology.

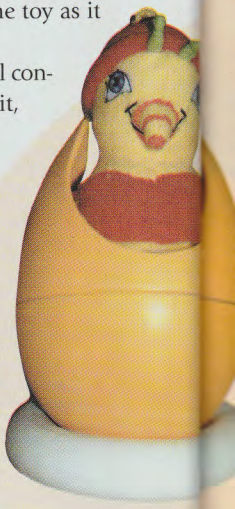
The department of interactive technologies at Children's Television Workshop has come out with a twist on another adult communication device—the telephone. Elmo's Computer Phone debuted at Christmas for US$29.95 and allows children to interact with a PC. Using a CD-ROM, the child can hear different *Sesame Street* characters though a handset plugged into a computer. The program is able to recognize when the child is speaking and respond, but can't actually understand what the child is saying.



Elmo's Computer Phone keeps kids in touch

In the near future, CTW is looking to explore vehicles like toy submarines or spaceships that hook up to the computer, much like the Elmo phone. Rob Madell, group VP of interactive, envisions toy vehicles that hook up to a computer's mouse port so that virtual movements on the screen reflect physical movements of the toy as it is played with.

Strommen predicts the hottest high-tech products will continue to be interactive characters—everyone's doing it, although some in more advanced ways than others. He says the technology used by most of these interactive products is quite simple—"not very different from pulling a string"—but the more complex versions will either use the Net or internal technology to communicate with each other or a child. To compute info, they usually contain a low-powered processor. Last year's Actimates chip was an example of a chip that could do a fair bit of processing, he adds, yet it was "roadkill compared to a low-end PC."





Furby meets Spielberg in Tiger's new interactive E.T.



Playmates' Intelli-Tronic figures serve up a treat

This year, Tiger is upping the artificial intelligence of its interactive toy smash with Furby Babies, which VP of marketing and product development Jeff Jones says have a 25% larger vocabulary than their adult counterparts. The company is also coming out with a licensed E.T. toy (yes, from the Spielberg movie) that can interact with other Furby-brand toys. The toy will have a neck that raises and lowers, as well as a glowing index finger and heart. Much like a Furby, its verbal abilities will become more advanced as it is played with, and it will prompt the child to play built-in games. The E.T. toy will launch fall 2000 with an SRP of US$40. Although the E.T. film came out back in 1983, Jones says the character is still recognizable to many kids and parents and fits perfectly with Furby technology.

Playmates Toys has developed its own type of interactive technology consisting of eight licensed Simpsons Intelli-Tronic action figures (SRP US$6 each) that can interact with each other when they are in an Intelli-Tronic environment. On their own, the figures have no special capabilities, but when placed in one of the three environments (SRP US$20), such as the Simpsons' living room, the nuclear power plant or the Kwik-E-Mart, the characters are recognized and caused to speak. The Simpsons merch also includes a separate line of 15-inch, battery-operated characters (SRP US$25) that can speak 10 to 12 phrases independently and have two-minute conversations with other figures thanks to recognition through infra-red signals.

High-tech continued on page **73**

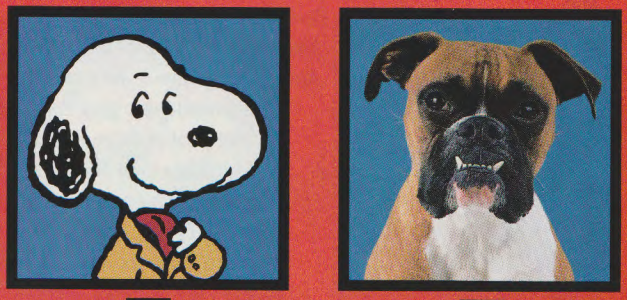
Technology meets biology with **Snubelgrass**

Another innovative wave of toys uses bio-technology. Snubelgrass Interactive, a recent toyco startup with offices in Israel and New York headed by Alysia Sagi-Dolev, has developed such a toy called Snubelgrass.

Sagi-Dolev, who holds a doctorate in biomedical engineering, developed the egg-like product to marry high-tech toys with features designed to help children learn about genetics and nurturing. The egg, which contains sensors and chips, emits a purring sound while gestating and must be held in order to hatch. The shell is transparent so the child can see the Snubelgrass fetus before it emerges. It will be available at retail this spring, with the initial launch targeting specialty markets in the U.S.

Sagi-Dolev says the toy uses bio-interactive play, which means "using signals from the body, be it touch or other parameters" to interact with the toy. She sees a whole new set of high-tech toys based on this concept, toys that are able to react to a child's human responses and respond accordingly—for example by increasing or decreasing its volume. **AD**

Choose who's been the biggest hound in licensing for fifty years.



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Analysis

Entertainment licensing:

Short burn falls out of favor as market wakes up

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

After a year of near stagnant growth, and dire predictions for the licensed toy biz, 1999 marked a major comeback. U.S. toy sales jumped 7% last year, from US$21 billion in 1998 to US$22.5 billion in 1999, according to the NPD Group. And despite rumors and media reports that licensing was on the rocks, in large part that increase can be attributed to the popularity of toys derived from entertainment-based properties. According to NPD data, for the period from January to October 1999, two such properties, Star Wars and Pokémon, ranked second and third respectively in terms of overall dollar share (Barbie ranked first), controlling 4.9% and 3.5% of retail sales in the toy category respectively. More than that, taken together, they nearly doubled the combined market share of the two top licensed properties of 1998, Winnie the Pooh (2.4%) and Sesame Street (1.9%). LIMA, the Licensing Industry Merchandisers Association, estimates that licensed toys accounted for 40% of all toys sold last year, up 5% from five years previous. It's all welcome news for those who still view licensing as an effective driver of toy sales.

Still, toycos are not rushing back in to license every property they lay their eyes on. Instead, they are slowly reinventing the business by shifting their property portfolios away from shooting-star blockbusters towards more reliable properties, which are often supprted by TV, more established features or books. Along with this new conservatism comes more realistic expectations regarding the performance of high-profile properties and more careful consideration of which properties to invest in.

"There's no way we set out and say that 20% of our business must be licensed, because that would be setting ourselves up for failure," says Joanna Reesby, senior VP of business affairs, Hasbro Properties Group. "It's more a question of figuring out what is hot and what we think will drive our business. In 1997, when we ran toys for *Jurassic Park*, *Batman* and *Star Wars*, it was a heavily licensed year, and in 1998 we had fewer licenses. Last year was very big again with *Phantom Menace* and *Pokémon*, but 2000 will probably be less so," says Reesby. She adds that last year Hasbro sold roughly an even mix of licensed and non-licensed boys toys domestically.

Leo Hauser, co-CEO of St. Louis-based Trendmasters, says his company produces a 50-50 split between licensed and non-licensed toys, and he views the rise in sales of licensed product as a reaction to the quality of the licenses in 1999 that the toys were based on. "I think toy companies will continue to look at entertainment-based licensing in exactly the same way they always have, on a case-by-case basis," he says.



Taking a pragmatic approach to licensing is an understandable position for toycos to adopt these days, especially when seen in the context of recent developments in the industry. Key among those changes has been a shift in the retail landscape, which is seeing retailers supporting fewer and fewer properties, even though there are more licensed properties vying for shelf space.

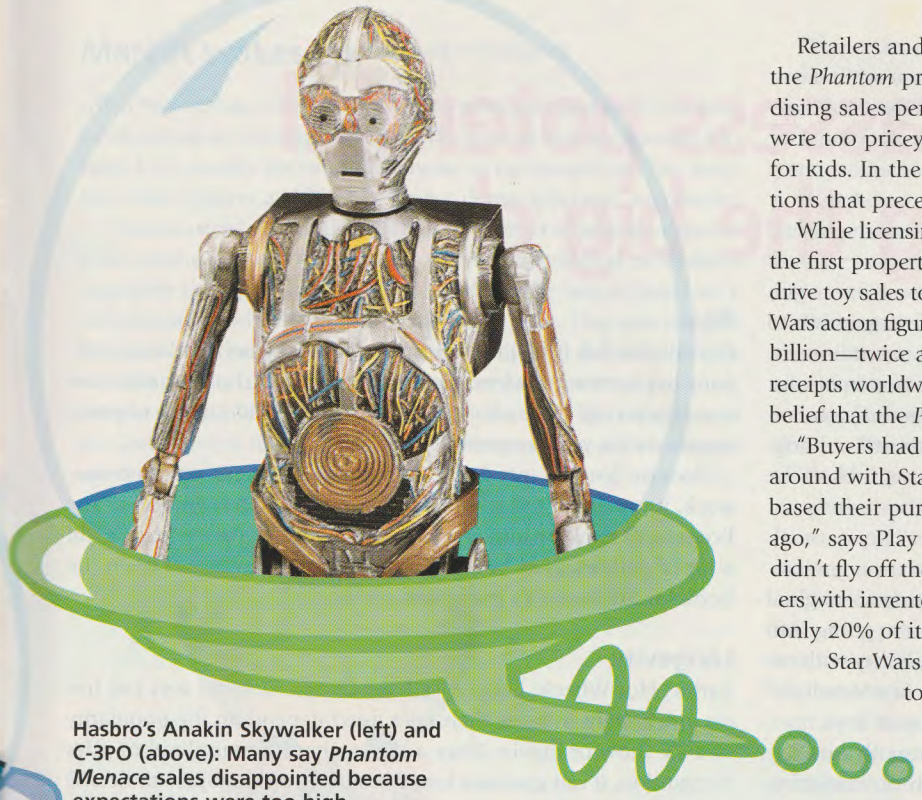
"Ten years ago, you'd see one or two pretty high-profile properties come out in the summer and in the winter, now you have five or six coming out in each period," says Michael Tabakin, director of licensing and sales promotions at Toys 'R' Us.

Rich Brady, CEO of Play Co. Toys, a southern-California based retail chain, says his company gave wide support to only five or six properties last year, down from 30 properties five years ago. The reason for the reduction, says Brady, was because the company was absorbing too many losses in markdowns on licensed product that didn't move.



Pokémon piloted from zero-Q to sales-topper in less than a year

Another industry change—perhaps the most important—is that the established vehicle for success in toy licensing, the



Hasbro's Anakin Skywalker (left) and C-3PO (above): Many say *Phantom Menace* sales disappointed because expectations were too high

theatrical event pic, isn't paying dividends like it once did. *Godzilla*, *Lost in Space* and *Tarzan* all came out with high sales expectations then disappointed toycos and retailers when it came to merch sales. Such losing gambles show that it's getting harder for toycos to gauge which films will spawn a winning license.

The two biggest entertainment hits of 1999, *The Phantom Menace* and *Pokémon*, underscore the increasingly precarious nature of entertainment licensing in the toy biz. One, the latest installment in the largest revenue grossing licensed toy franchise of all time, was expected to resurrect toy sales from the doldrums; the other, a Japanese property (albeit with a strong Asian pedigree) had a non-existent Q score in North America and was perceived as having meager prospects, as evidenced by the initial reluctance of retailers to buy in. At the end of 1999, though, it was the latter that had frantic parents casing toy stores, fighting over the last *Pokémon Yellow* cartridge, while walls full of *Phantom Menace* action figures ceased to excite. And though both properties generated in excess of US$500 million in traditional toy sales for the first three quarters of the year, by late November, no *Star Wars* items were registering on top 20 seller lists. Long before that, many in the industry were already holding their noses when talking about the *Phantom Menace*.

Retailers and toycos have no shortage of explanations as to why the *Phantom* product didn't live up to its billing from a merchandising sales perspective: The movie wasn't good enough, the toys were too pricey, *Star Wars* was cool for parents, ergo it wasn't cool for kids. In the end, most point to the unrealistic market expectations that preceded the film and the toys' release.

While licensing has always been a part of the toy biz, Star Wars was the first property to demonstrate that the right entertainment could drive toy sales to dizzying heights. Before the release of *Phantom*, Star Wars action figures and other licensed merch reportedly grossed US$4.5 billion—twice as much as the first three movies tallied in box office receipts worldwide. Retailers, understandably, were operating on the belief that the *Phantom Menace* product would yield similar success.

"Buyers had a mental picture of what happened the first time around with Star Wars, and how short the product was, and so they based their purchases on what they felt they lost in sales 20 years ago," says Play Co.'s Rich Brady. Unfortunately, when the product didn't fly off the shelves as everyone anticipated, it left some retailers with inventory problems. By late December, Play Co. had moved only 20% of its Star Wars merch, and had to mark down all of its Star Wars product by 50%, swallowing a loss of US$500,000 to get it off the shelves.

Though Reesby says Hasbro met its sales predictions with *Phantom*, what the toyco didn't do was explode them, which in many corners of the toy biz translates into failure. "It's only

Market wakes up continued on page **71**

Choose which brother and sister recently had a sell-out show on QVC.





(check one)

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Licensed or original?

How toycos assess potential when making the big choice

BY SIMON ASHDOWN

So you want to produce the next toy hit? The first question to consider is whether to go for the hottest new entertainment license or to come up with something original. Remember, for every *Pokémon* license, there are barrels full of licensed merch languishing in discount, and for every Furby, there's a short-lived original toy that you've never even heard of. Here's a brief look at the pros and cons for each approach:

Marketing costs

Generally, you can expect to dish out more promoting an original toy than a licensed one. "With an original toy, you're going into stores with a product that consumers have no familiarity with, so you have to generate that familiarity yourself," says Ben Varadi, VP of product development at Toronto-based Spin Master Toys.

Although marketing costs for licensed toys are usually less, toy licensees may be required to pay into a CMF (common marketing fund), a sum of money licensors collect from licensees to cover retail promotions and advertising. Toycos pay the CMF fee—which amounts to about 2% to 3% of the wholesale price of the toys—on top of any advertising they might be doing themselves. Some of the larger players, like Hasbro, manage to opt out. "In a lot of cases, I can get a licensor to agree that we can forgo the CMF contribution because we do a lot of our own marketing and we'll be running TV advertising, which a lot of their licensees don't do," says Hasbro senior VP of business affairs Joanna Reesby.

Development costs

Expect to pay a little more for an original toy. "With a licensed product, we don't have to spend the time wondering if an action figure is too big, or how it should sound when it talks, or what color the packaging should be," says Spin Master's Varadi. "All these questions that need to be answered when you're creating original product are already done for you. You get the style guide and you're off to the races."

Still, whatever toycos save in developmental costs by opting for licensed can easily be gobbled up by licensing fees. In addition to the royalty (which sits somewhere between 10% and 20% of a toy's wholesale price for theatrical properties) and the CMF (which amounts to another 2% to 3%), there's the advance, a portion of the total promised sales given to the licensor up front. The size of the advance generally varies depending on the scale of the property.

Risk

Overall, the risk is far greater for an original toy because a toy company has to create awareness for its toy from scratch. No matter how toyetic your toy, there's no studio spending US$30 million to create awareness for your property.

Because licensed merch has the support of a major studio or network, its an easier sell to retailers, who feel the recognition of the license will translate into an easier sell to kids. Of course, there's still a lot of risk involved because if the toys don't sell, you're on the hook for the licensor's guarantee.

Longevity

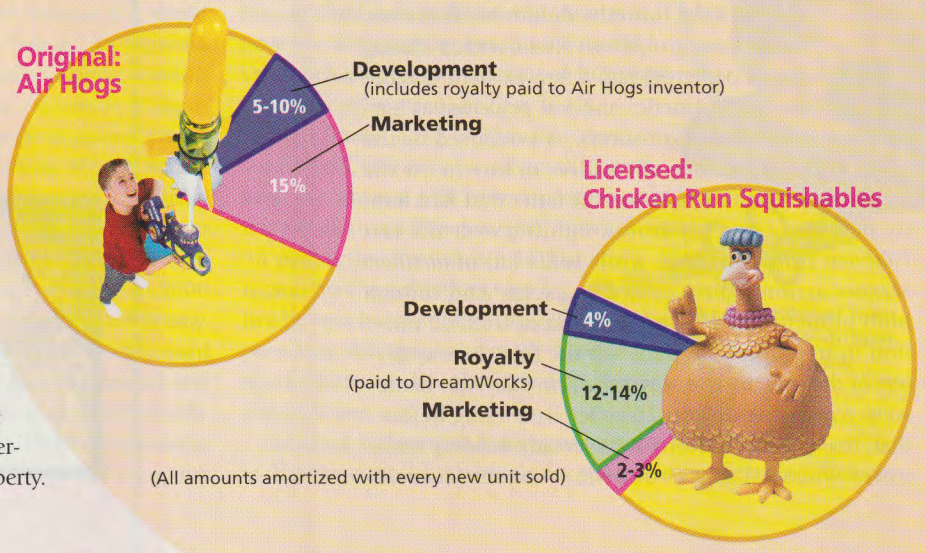
Barbie, Hot Wheels, Lego, Easy Bake Ovens. Original toys can live on indefinitely, because their sales don't depend on the popularity of a TV show or movie. Once a toy reaches a certain level of sales recognition, it can graduate into a brand, allowing toycos to license out the property on everything from bed sheets to beef jerky. Licensing original brands such as Action Man, Playskool and Monopoly has become a lucrative business for Hasbro.

It's another story with licensed toys. "You live and die by your license. The product is secondary," says Spin Master's Varadi. "Once the license is no longer hot, nobody wants the product anymore."

Putting it into perspective

To give you an idea of the actual costs involved, we asked Spin Master to reveal the breakdown for Air Hogs, one of its successful original toys, and compare it to the breakdown for Chicken Run Squishables figures, which it will produce under license from DreamWorks for the *Chicken Run* feature debuting June 23.

Cost breakdown as a percentage of wholesale list price



Market wakes up continued from page 69

when you achieve 20% to 30% above what you said you'd achieve, when people sit back and say 'wow.' The licenses that are deemed successful are usually the ones that sneak up on people like Toy Story, like Power Rangers, and like Pokémon is doing right now," says Reesby.

Trendmasters' Leo Hauser can fully relate to untenable expectations. As the master toy licensee for the 1998 theatrical pic *Godzilla* (arguably the second most-hyped movie of the last millennium), Trendmasters did US$150 million in retail sales. That was roughly two and half times what the company pulled in for *Independence Day*, for which it was also the master toy licensee. And yet, most people viewed *Godzilla* as a failure, says Hauser. "The expectations for *Godzilla* were higher, but with *Independence Day*, everybody was caught by surprise," he says.



Hasbro's Pikachu plush has reason to smile

While Hauser, Reesby and other toy execs agree that to attain a successful licensed toy line, you need to carefully manage the expectations associated with the film property, achieving that feat is becoming more difficult due to an ever-shrinking sales window and the often conflicting agendas of the licensor, the toyco and the retailer.

Most toys based on a theatrical pic have a six-week period in which to sell at retail, down from eight to 10 weeks five years ago. Licensors trying to get the most out of the shorter window can issue too many licenses in key categories like toys and ancillary categories such as key chains and T-shirts. While that situation works for retailers and licensors in the abstract, it can and often does fly in the face of an economic principle that seems to govern hit toys: Less supply equals more consumer demand.

"Licensing so much merchandise can be a self-fulfilling prophecy for failure, because there's too much product that gets out there, people can get sick of it, and the quality of that product is sometimes suspect," says Hauser.

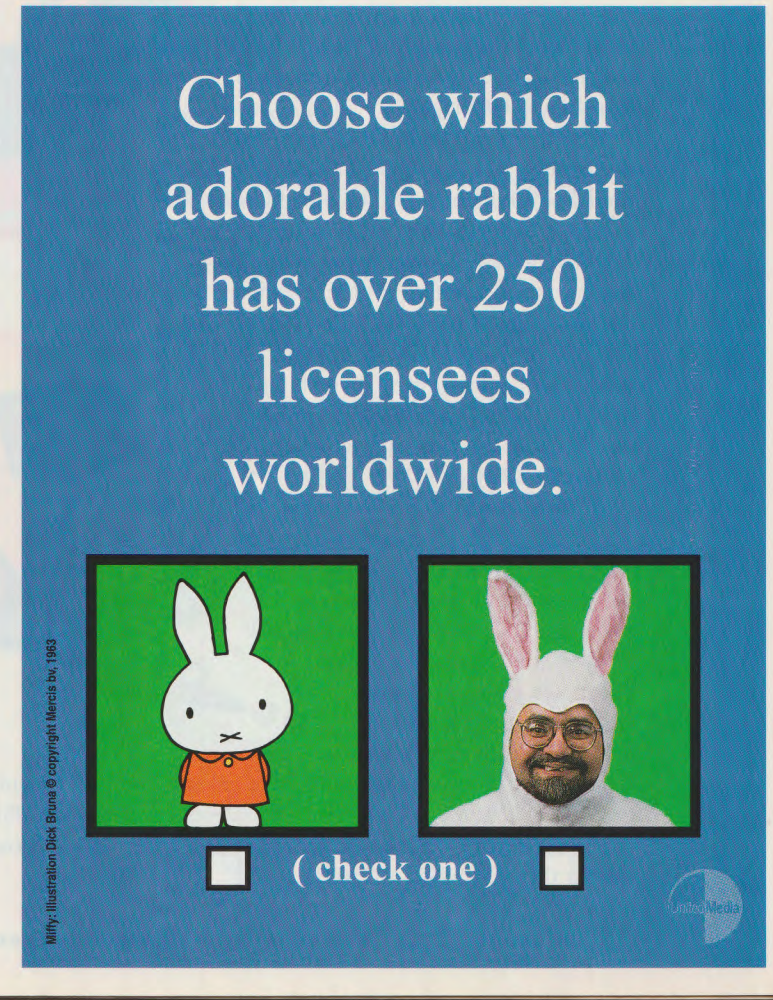
Reesby agrees, adding that "in hindsight, there may have been some ancillary categories that Lucas should not have gone into [for the *Phantom Menace*]." At the same time, she does sympathize with the situation licensors face in terms of licensing film properties.

"Is it a cunning thing to ship short in year one and create heat around the toys? It's a question we often knock around with licensors. It's a real bind in that regard, because they're forgoing dollars in hand for hopefully an intangible, longer-term benefit of making your product look hot," says Reesby.

Whether or not licensors will become shrewder in licensing theatrical properties in the future may be academic in the coming year. At least one retail buyer, Play Co.'s Brady, says his stores will be taking a much more conservative approach to movie-based products.

Trendmasters is also less bullish on theatrical properties. At press time, the company had no licenses this year to produce toys for movie pics, as compared to 1998, when it produced lines for two movies (*Lost In Space* and *Godzilla*) and 1999, when it produced a line for *The Iron Giant*. Instead, the company has shifted its focus to TV. This year, it will release product based on Cartoon Network properties such as *The Powerpuff Girls*, *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Johnny Bravo*, as part of an agreement it signed with Warner Bros. last year making it master toy for select original Cartoon Net shows.

"I believe movie events are a riskier proposition than they were five or ten years ago," says Hauser. "They have a shorter burn. Kids aren't watching them five days a week. With a movie, they go and see it once, maybe twice if you're lucky, but the chances are the next time they'll see it again is as a video release. A TV show is a 22-minute commercial that's out there five days a week to drive your product. If you look at the top performers right now, they're all on TV." ●



Anime tsunami hits Toy

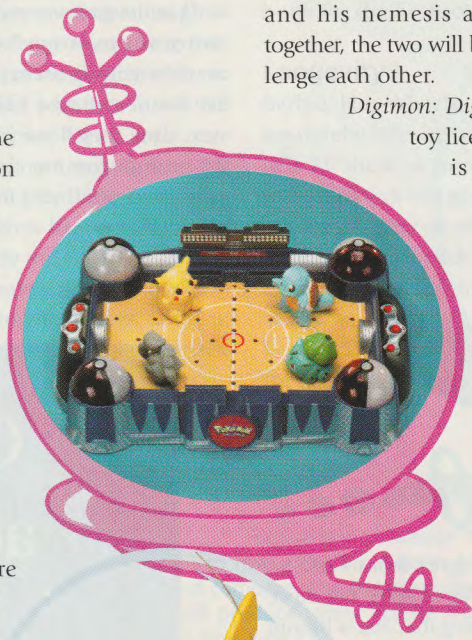
BY ANDREA HAMAN

Anime-inspired toys just may be the most crowded category at Toy Fair. First there was a *Pokémon* video game—now there's half a dozen properties and more SKUs than you can shake a stick at. And it all happened so fast. Who had heard of *Digimon* at last year's Toy Fair? Now there are PlayStation titles, action figures, play sets—the works. From the U.S. debut of *Gundam Wing* to resurrection plans for *Sailor Moon*, here's what's coming out in the anime arena for Toy Fair and beyond.

Pokémon master toy licensee Hasbro is creating 16 brand-new products for its boys toys division, compared with 11 in 1999, and 11 new items for existing lines for 2000. One of the highlights is the Pokémon Tournament Stadium, a 16- x 11.5-inch tabletop game that will pit two- and three-inch figures against each other in a 3-D battle. These action figures will be the smartest ever, says Holly Ingram, spokesperson for the boys toys division, because they will store information, such as character point levels, that can be read by the electronic board and transferred with the figure from board to board. The strategy game, hitting stores around August with a suggested retail price (SRP) of US$40, will include two figures. Additional figures will be sold for US$8 each.

Electronic Stadium Pokédex, a handheld device kids can use to download stats about their Stadium figures, will be offered as an accessory (US$15 SRP). Also in the line are 4.5-inch Action Combat Figures, each possessing an action attack feature specific to the character (streeting July with a US$5.99 SRP) and a Pokémon Evolution Assortment consisting of six-inch figures capable of three transformations per figure (streeting August with a US$14.99 SRP).

Hasbro-owned Tiger Electronics is also raising the bar for 2000 with plans for 130 new items in 39 Pokémon SKUs, compared with 22 items in 17 SKUs last year, says Jim Bousman, VP of marketing. Notables include a Pikachu RC car slated to street in the spring (US$29.99 SRP), along with an animated bank featuring two characters in Pokéballs that face off accompanied by music and lights when money is deposited (US$20 to US$25 SRP). A memory game called I Choose You Challenge will come out for the fall (US$15 to US$18 SRP).





Let the games begin: Hasbro's Pokémon Tournament Stadium (above) and Tiger's Pokémon radio-controlled car

Tiger's biggest products for fourth quarter will be an interactive Pikachu and an interactive Meowth, likely larger and carrying a higher SRP than Furby due to new features. Like Furby, the toy will interact with its owner, and the addition of speech-recognition technology will enable the toy to learn its owner's voice and be trained to follow voice commands over time. When Pikachu and his nemesis are brought together, the two will be able to challenge each other.



Bandai adds new toys to Digimon collection (above)

Digimon: Digital Monsters master toy licensee Bandai America is playing catch-up at full steam with new products emphasizing the property's "digital positioning as our difference," says Brian Goldner, executive VP and COO. *Digimon World* for Sony PlayStation will come out in March (US$42.99 SRP), and two additional PlayStation titles—including a version of Bandai's Digi Battle card game released last month—will launch in the fall. The Digivice, used by kids in the TV series to make their digital monster companions evolve, will be available in April (US$12.99 SRP). In the same month, Bandai will release talking figures (US$5.99 SRP). Six-inch plush will hit in May (US$5.99 SRP), and 12-inch deluxe plush in the fall (US$14.99 SRP). Finally, six-inch Deluxe Micro Playsets will launch in June (US$9.99 SRP). Additions to the 1.5-inch collectible, 2.5-inch action and 5.5-inch transforming figures will coincide with the introduction of new characters in the TV series. At press time, a second season featuring the addition of new characters and settings was expected to be announced by Fox Kids around Toy Fair. Other property-enhancing extras include the release in Japan of a *Digimon* movie, which may be brought to the U.S. by Fox Kids, although the kidnet could not confirm at press time.

Bandai is also showcasing a second line of toys based on action/adventure TV series *Gundam Wing*, which kicks off next month as part of Cartoon Network's Toonami block. In Japan, the 20-year-old franchise includes seven TV series,

Fair

eight movies, four direct-to-video series and many comic books, and has generated about US$4.5 billion to date, says Goldner. The anchor for the U.S. merchandising program is a line of snap-together model action-figure kits, articulated in up to 30 places. The kits range from five to 7.5 inches and from roughly 100 to several hundred pieces (US$7.99 to US$24.99 SRP). About 30 Toys 'R' Us stores in Los Angeles began selling the kits last fall, and the kits go national next month. *Gundam—Rise from the Ashes* will debut for Sega's Dreamcast in April. Most of the merchandise will be aimed at boys ages eight and up, but the model kits could appeal to teens and young adults, says Goldner. Bandai is also developing traditional *Gundam Wing* action figures (skewed to ages five to eight) for a fall release.

The anime-based toys keep on coming with *Monster Rancher* debuts from master toy Playmates. The company is planning to add to the 100 monster figures already available with year-round additions to the Mystery Monster 1.5-inch assortments in packs of four, eight and 18, and bean-filled plush based on the five main monster characters slated to street mid-spring (US$5 SRP). Jeff Trojan, VP of marketing for boys toys, says Toy Fair highlights also include 12-inch talking Mocchi plush (US$20 SRP), collectible clip-ons featuring a holographic coin that opens a container containing a 1.5-inch PVC figure (US$5 SRP) and talking, articulated seven-inch figures (US$8 SRP). All will street mid-year.



Playmates bolsters its stable with year-round Monster Rancher additions (above), and Bandai takes Gundam Wing national with action figures (below)

Other toy licensees hitched to the 400-character franchise include Manley Toy Quest (role-play sets), MGA Entertainment (sculpted walkie-talkies, polystone tile game), X-Concepts (mini-skateboards and mini-snowboards), Disguise (Halloween costumes and masks) and Great Eastern Entertainment (wall scrolls, posters, playing cards). Tecmo, which produced the video game inspiration for the TV series, is creating the first Game Boy title for the property, says Carol McGovney, senior VP of U.S. licensing and merchandising at BKN (where the series airs).

Anime continued on page **74**

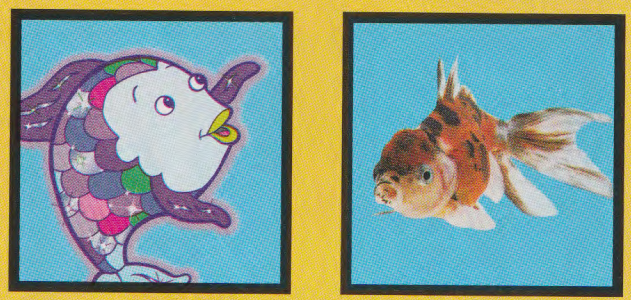
High-tech continued from page **67**

So what will the future of high-tech look like? Some would argue that it's already here—in the form of the convergence of television and the Internet, and toy applications from the convergence world, which Strommen and others term "the post-PC environment." He predicts various toys will come together in one basic box and some form of on-line data recorder. An application might be a mystery-type game in which the players would be able to download different clues and play an entirely different game each time, using a "tablet" type device that would allow downloadable information to be carried with the person. He also envisions what he terms a "pretend playmate"—a robot-like virtual friend.

He sees toys like Lego Systems Mindstorms done in a way that is "less clunky." Rather than having to use the computer to change information, he envisions a "smart device," containing all necessary information within the toy. That would mean that if you put wheels or wings on the toy, it would "know" it had wheels or wings and act accordingly.

"The current situation with toys and technology is that it's very fluid in the sense that there's a zillion different technologies," concludes Strommen, "but on the other side, toy companies are naturally conservative and very suspicious of doing something innovative. The potential is huge, but actually the technology [seen in toys thus far] is very disappointing." ●

Choose which fun loving fish is making a huge splash with a new animated tv series on HBO Family.



(check one)

© Rainbow Fish Productions, Inc. 1998. Rainbow Fish character © Nord-Sud Verlag/Marcus Pfister

Anime continued from page 73

Dragon Ball Z is far from a newcomer in the U.S., but the show is riding the anime wave and expanding its toy and licensing push this year. The TV series has been getting more exposure since its fall 1998 debut on Cartoon Network's Toonami block, and that has helped to build interest in the property, says Cindy Fukunaga, VP of FUNimation Productions, which handles licensing of the series (except in some publishing categories) in North America, New Zealand and Australia.

Irwin Toy signed on as *Dragon Ball Z*'s North American master toy licensee in late 1998. The toy maker plans to roll out 30 to 40 SKUs in 2000, a startling increase from five in 1999. Additional figures will be added year-round to the two-inch collectible figures in packs of six (US$9.99 SRP), five-inch action figures (US$5.99 SRP), five-inch Deluxe Energy Blasters (US$7.99 to US$8.99 SRP) and 16-inch supersize figures (US$24.99 SRP). Key chains with two-inch figures (US$2.99 SRP) and 3.5- to four-inch bendables (US$2.99 SRP) shipped mid-January, and one-inch mini-figures, 12 per card, are following early this month (US$9.99 SRP). Diecast vehicles (US$5 to US$7 SRP) and play sets (US$20 to US$50 SRP) will ship around July. The target market is boys ages four and up, and teens and young adults are also collecting the product, says Bret Dilabbio, marketing manager at Irwin. The company may offer exclusives or introduce characters for the specialty market before tackling mass, says Dilabbio.



DIC hopes to restart *Sailor Moon* licensing with new toys from Irwin

Anime property *Sailor Moon* is venturing back into licensing for the mass market this year. M.J. Chisholm, VP of licensing and merchandising at DIC Entertainment, which holds licensing and merchandising rights (excluding publishing rights) in English-speaking territories, doesn't hesitate to concede that the property's initial U.S. licensing program in 1995 proved a "miserable failure," mostly due to problems with syndication clearances. The property has been gaining exposure on Cartoon Network's Toonami since June 1998, and the market in general has few strong girl properties, paving the way for a relaunch, says Chisholm. Licensed products will target girls ages six to 12.

At press time, Irwin was in final negotiations with DIC to become master toy licensee, and MGA Entertainment was negotiating for electronic and other toy rights. Irwin, which has been the Canadian *Sailor Moon* master toy since 1995 (and produced toys for the U.S. specialty market last year), will become master toy for all of North America, says Ingrid Boehm, marketing manager at Irwin. A new lineup geared to the mass market will include two-inch collectible dolls (US$2.99 SRP), six-inch dolls (US$9.99 SRP), 11.5-inch fashion dolls (US$14.99 SRP) and 17-inch collectible dolls (US$24.99 SRP). The dolls will start coming out in the spring with the full line available by June. Irwin is also launching four- to six-inch plush (US$12.99 SRP) for mass-market release in April or May, along with accessories such as medallions, a magic wand and a jewelry box, all streeting in the fall (US$4.99 to US$24.99 SRP).

Victoria O'Connor, a licensing manager at MGA, says her company's Toy Fair debuts include 9.5-inch sculpted walkie-talkies with articulated arms (US$19.99 SRP), clear electronic bounce balls with a figure inside (US$5 SRP), role-play sets (US$19.99 SRP) and a proprietary polystone tile product called Kashii Bazzii (US$19.99 SRP for starter packs, US$6.99 SRP for extra tile packs). MGA's products will be available in most mass-market retailers by September.

Also vying for the girls demo, Nelvana's *Cardcaptor* is pursuing broadcast and video deals, with plans to launch a fashion-driven and collectible licensing program. The line would include such toy items as fashion dolls and accessories, key chains, plush and collectible cards, says Sid Kaufman, executive VP of worldwide merchandising. ●

The Powerpuff Girls: Tough girls with big toy plans



Produced State-side for TV but anime-inspired in look, The Powerpuff Girls leapt into toy aisles late last year, and have even bigger plans for the coming months. The superhero trio's appeal is that they are sweet and adorable, yet tough enough to defeat monsters, says Brian Weinstock, VP of creative development at Trendmasters, the property's master toy licensee. The toymaker is targeting primarily girls ages five to 11, although the action-oriented show draws boys and girls.

First up, kindergarten and lab play sets with four-inch dolls will come out for the spring (US$9.99 SRP). Dress-up sets for girls (US$9.99 and US$19.99 SRP) and giant plush topping out at 36 inches high (US$29.99 SRP) will hit stores for Easter. For boys ages five to 11, teens and collectors of all ages, Trendmasters is creating sets with six- to seven-inch monster figures and two-inch Powerpuff Girl figures (US$7.99 SRP) for summer or fall release. The big fourth-quarter offering includes interactive dolls based on the three superheroes (US$39.99 SRP), each with a Power Watch so the owner can send messages to the doll. The dolls will be able to sing songs, tell stories and stand guard over your room.

Out already are 10-inch talking superhero dolls, 3.5-inch key chains with sound, six-inch beanbag plush, 12-inch role-play dolls with sound and inflatable furniture. **AH**

Eurotoys battle U.S. imports for classic status

BY ANDY FRY

These days, no one likes to think of their property as being a fast-burn phenomenon. Even if you make a fortune at retail in year one, the ultimate goal is to create a classic that can generate revenue year after year.

As a result, European properties debuting at Toy Fair will find that the greatest competition for shelf space comes from well-established brands that can demonstrate ongoing TV exposure, substantial marketing support and a proven track record at retail.

For older kids, Europe is poised to see a new wave of Bandai-produced Power Rangers toys says Saban Merchandising Europe managing director Jean-Philippe Randisi.

Power Rangers product sales in France increased 20% last year according to Randisi, and he predicts a similar sales increase continent-wide in 2000. "It took us a while to get the trust of retailers. But the show is looking stronger, and Bandai has some great product lined up for next year, which should help our efforts to turn Power Rangers into a classic."

Something similar is going on at Copyright Promotions Ltd. (CPL), where the big push in 2000 will be Star Wars. CPL director of brands Paul Southern says: "We had a good year with Star Wars in 1999, but we had an important job to do managing unrealistic expectations."

The major product partners on Star Wars are Lego, which did well with a Star Wars line in Germany, and Hasbro. Both are onboard until 2005, when the third prequel in the current run will be launched. Other partners underline the depth of support for the franchise. Among these are publishers Havas, Bertelsmann and Dorling Kindersley, along with Cadbury's and Heinz.

In 2000, the main promotional hook for new Star Wars product lines is a video launch in April. But Southern stresses that "Star Wars has emerged as a toy brand in its own right. The movies provide a boost in exposure, but the toy line is not dependent on them."

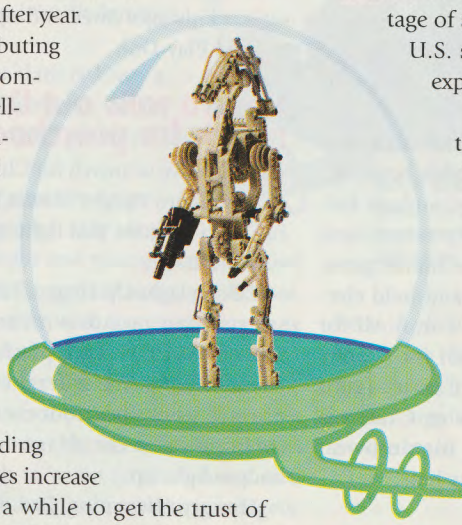
Of course, nothing can staunch the spontaneous combustion of a kids phenomenon. And both of the above properties will face potentially explosive hits such as *Pokémon* and *Toy Story 2* in 2000.

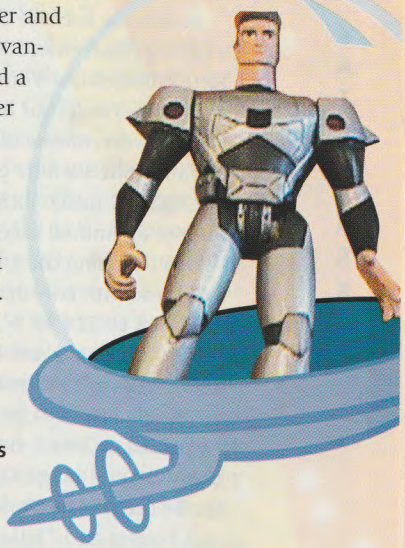
For properties skewing older than preschool, high-profile titles usually prove themselves in the U.S. before making headway in Europe. This was certainly the case with *Pokémon*, which was ignored by Europe for a year, but has now been snapped up by most major European terrestrial broadcasters. In terms of licensing product, it is too early to say if it will repeat the U.S. pattern—but expectations are high.

Not many companies can compete without synching into U.S. marketing muscle in this older age range. One company with European ties coming to Toy Fair with a slew of properties for older kids is U.S./France producer and distributor BKN, a company with the advantage of a head office in New York and a U.S. syndicated network to garner exposure for its properties.

BKN senior VP of international consumer products Veronique Angelino has three kids properties at different phases of development.

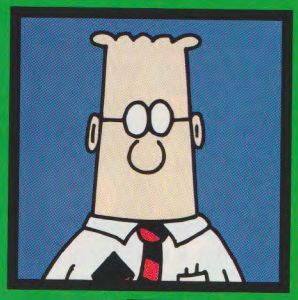
Eurotoys continued on page **77**

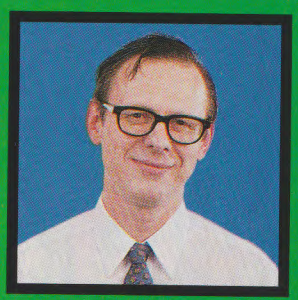




CPL pushes Star Wars in 2000 (left), while BKN readies Roswell Conspiracies merch to invade the U.K., France and Germany

Choose which engineer has his own tv series and can be seen on hundreds of licensed products worldwide.





(check one)

DILBERT © United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Cool new toys

BY KATE BARKER

Crocodile wrestling for kids

Animal Planet's *Crocodile Hunter* is hitting retail this fall with a line of toys exploiting the offbeat personality of croc wrestler host Steve Irwin.

Master toy licensee Cincinnati, Ohio-based N2 Toys is rolling out a talking plush crocodile hunter with an oversized rotocast head and feet. Talking Steve comes with a slot in which kids can store their animal tags and hear his commentary on each collectible beast. He also delivers dozens of his standard quips like: "Don't muck with it!" and "She's a little grumpy!"

Other N2 merch includes an off-road vehicle complete with a boat on top, an animal cage in back and a detailed collectible beast. N2 is also debuting the Deluxe Agro wrestling crocodile, a plush kid-sized croc with jaws that snap and a whipping tail. All products have an SRP of US$24.99. N2 will also make a role-play croc hunter game.

Also on-board are: Hasbro Games for puzzles, hand-held electronic games and board games; New York-based Fun 4 All for novelties and key chains; Houston, Texas-based DSI for novelty electronics; Creation Entertainment of Glendale, California for glassware and mugs; Giant Merchandising of Commerce, California for T-shirts; New York-based American Marketing for sleepwear and boxers and Dallas, Texas-based Bio-Domes for hats.

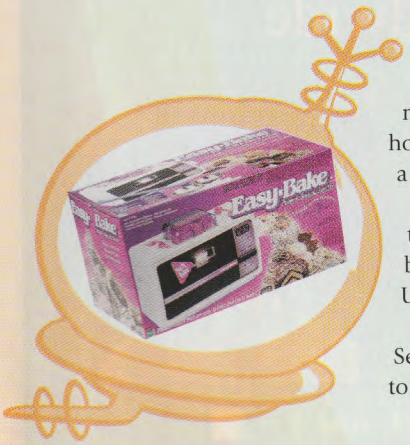
You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch...

Ever green and ever hot, the Dr. Seuss character is getting a big-screen boost from Universal Picture's holiday 2000 release of *Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Universal Studios Consumer Products Group has lined up Playmates Toys of Costa Mesa, California as the master toy licensee.

Playmates will produce a Grinch line featuring talking and interactive plush, five-inch figure sets, vehicle sets with figurines, a Grinch holiday countdown clock, character key chains and an OOglie Grinch. SRPs range from US$3.50 to US$22.50. All products will be available at mass in November.

Carbo-loading lineup for kids

Now kids can make fast-food goodies on their own with Hasbro's new line of munchie-merch available this August.



Leggo my Eggo has new meaning with the Easy-Bake Oven Eggo Waffles Bake Set. For an SRP of US$9.99, kids ages eight and up can start each morning right with marshmallow or blueberry topping on their homemade Eggo waffles. The set comes with a waffle pan and serving tray.

The Play-Doh Taco Bell Playset for ages three and up lets kids mold pretend tacos, burritos and nachos. The set retails for US$9.99.

The Easy-Bake Oven McDonald's Pie Bake Set includes a snack tray and pie wrappers to go along with the McTreats. For an SRP of US$9.99, the eight and up set get three mixes, apple-cinnamon filling, a pie maker, six pie sleeves and, of course, McDonald's stickers.

After chowing down on homemade goodies, kids can practice for a visit to the dentist with the Play-Doh Dr. Drill 'N Fill Playset (SRP US$9.99). Complete with toy drill and dental accessories, the playset lets kids ages three and up mold teeth, drill and fill with silver-colored Play-Doh.

Hasbro rolls out Dragon Tales merch for preschoolers

The first wave of merch for Children's Television Workshop/Columbia TriStar co-pro *Dragon Tales* is hitting Toy Fair with dragons that light up, hiccup and hatch.

Talking Light-Up Dragon Tales



Talking Light-Up Dragon Tales streeted last month with an SRP of US$19.99. Each plush character says five different phrases when kids squeeze its hands and the dragon badges light up.

Hungry Hiccuping Ord, a plush dragon that eats, hiccups and talks when kids feed him dragon goodies, and Babysitting Surprise Cassie street in July with an SRP of US$24.99 each. The Cassie figure comes with a dragon egg containing two baby sister or brother dragons inside (gender unknown until hatch time—that's the surprise). The Babysitting set also includes baby bottles, hair brushes, dragon blankies and birth certificates.

Sing and Dance Clifford



Clifford the big red singing dog?

After 40 years on the bookshelves, Clifford is finally making his small-screen debut with an animated series launching this fall, and Scholastic Entertainment is gearing up for the premiere with new merch.

Master toy licensee Toy Island of Woodbury, New York is rolling out a Clifford the Big Red Dog Singing Hand Puppet (complete with a Clifford activity book) for an SRP of US$14.99. Next up, a Sing and Dance Clifford the Big Red Dog Electronic Plush includes infrared technology and has an SRP of US$24.99. Both will street in the spring or early summer. Indianapolis, Indiana-based Warren Industries will add to the line with a series of Clifford puzzles and games debuting at Toy Fair.

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Roswell Conspiracies is the most advanced, with terrestrial TV deals in the U.K., France and Germany.

Italy's Giochi Presiozi is poised to launch "a line of toys that reflect the show very well," says Angelino. There are transformer trucks, walkie-talkies, weapons and four action figures that "if you buy them all, allow you to assemble a fifth."

Monster Rancher is another priority for BKN. In partnership with Playmates Toys, the property is inspiring particular interest in France, Spain and South America, says Angelino.

The newest property on the BKN slate is *Kong*, a futuristic retelling of the giant gorilla classic. At Toy Fair, Angelino will start discussions with "potential toy and interactive licensees."

In the context of *Kong*, Angelino puts her finger on an interesting trend in licensing circles. "My view is that children are leaving toys younger and younger, and looking for something more from a property. So we increasingly give interactive companies an early sight of scripts and characters to ensure they can develop a concept that works."

Preschool in Europe is not dominated by the U.S. in quite the same way. But this has only served to intensify the competition. The most significant change in the European market has been the recognition that TV exposure alone is not enough to win a retailer's heart. You also need to support properties with weighty marketing budgets.

BBC Worldwide started this trend with Teletubbies—which continues to sell well—and extended it to Tweenies in fall 1999. Both properties will continue to receive massive on-air and retail support throughout 2000. HIT's *Bob the Builder* and the Carlton/Henson show *Mopatop's Shop* also launched major consumer campaigns in 1999.

In 2000, Henson's *Bear in the Big Blue House* will get similar treatment. Product starts to roll out in the U.K. in April, with a view to a major push in the fall. There will be books, toys and videos, as well as sniffing and dancing bears.

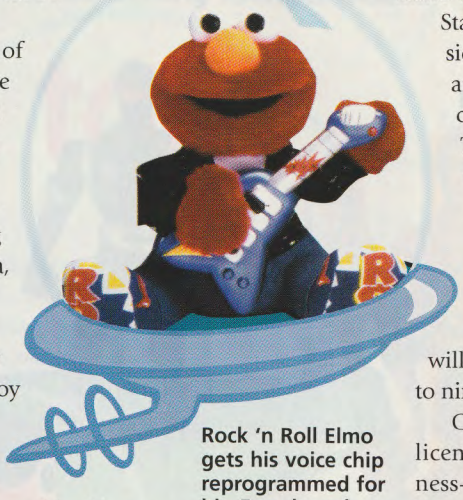
Henson's U.K.-based licensing manager Adrienne Collins was recently appointed to work on properties and publishing in the U.K. and Ireland. She stresses that "you need to show a real commitment to supporting the licensees. For *Bear*, we will start with a dedicated consumer products PR campaign, and in fall provide some sort of consumer marketing support for the property."



Mattel's sniffing, dancing Love to Dance Bear heads up Henson's big fall push in the U.K.

According to Children's Television Workshop regional VP, Europe, Barbara Herzinger, for a product to succeed, it is crucial to create some point of difference in the market. She says CTW will emphasize Sesame Street's educational brand values more in 2000.

CTW's big European toy launches for the next year, created by master toy Mattel, will be Rock 'n Roll Elmo and Ernie. The toys will be pushed State-side as well, but the European versions will have a major difference. "We are localizing these items by placing country-specific voice chips in the toys. That will more closely reflect the way we produce the show for individual European markets."



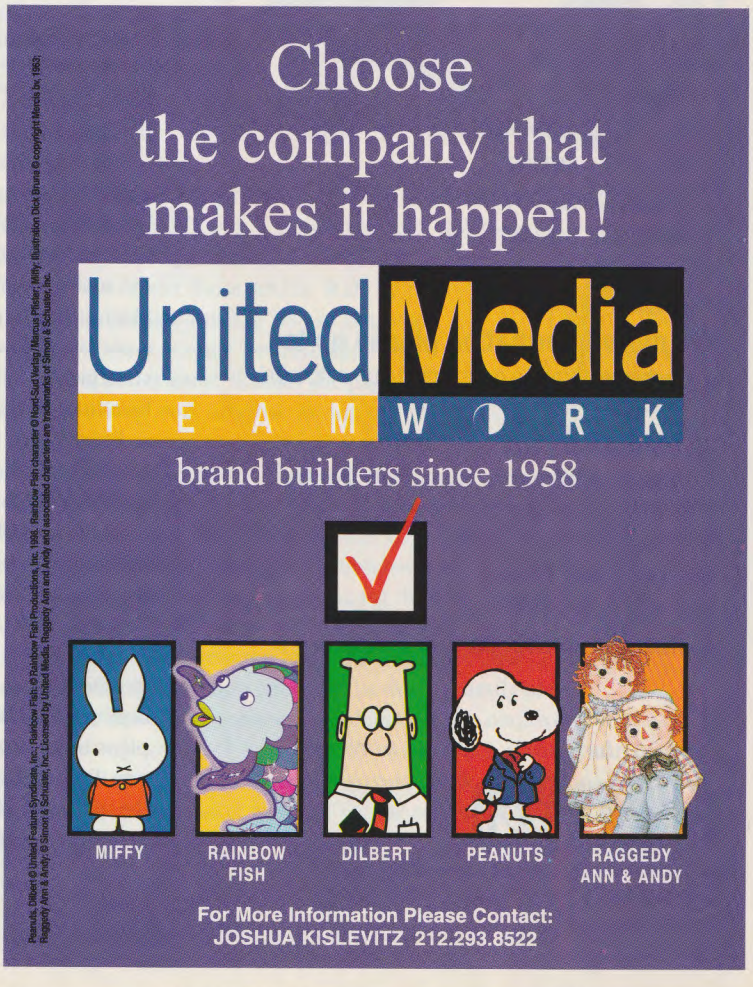
Rock 'n Roll Elmo gets his voice chip reprogrammed for big Euro launch

This year will also see the start of a European push, in partnership with Hasbro, on CTW/Columbia TriStar co-pro *Dragon Tales*, "a property that will allow us to break into the older five- to nine-year-old audience," says Herzinger.

Compared to the U.S., European toy licensing is a relatively immature business—which means there are still some important structural trends emerging.

At Fox, for example, great efforts have been made to integrate TV and licensing activities. The main effect is that Fox is now better placed to provide on-air exposure and marketing support to third parties. "We used to be very reliant on Saban properties," says Randisi, "but now we are seeking to work with third-party producers in areas of programming in which we are not so strong."

Eurotoys continued on page **78**



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Diabolique: One of few Europe-based properties primed for EU-wide merch campaign

Fox linked up with BKN for U.K. Monster Rancher push

Ravensburger subsidiary RTV Family Entertainment is also planning to increase its international activities in 2000. Its key property is classic German duo *Fix and Foxi* (52 x 30 minutes), which started life as a comic strip and now airs on ARD and Kinderkanal at home. The show has been sold to 25 territories.

A range of products (games, puzzles, beanies, CD-ROMs, etc.) will be launched for the German market in February 2000—closely followed by a TV movie. Subsequently, the property will spearhead RTV's ambitions in the U.S. and Europe. However, any merchandising plans will depend on the success or otherwise of the TV show. Another property called Philip—which features a charming gray mouse—is also being geared up for international rollout.

RTV's Andrea Keidel says the U.S. is a key target—but a tough market to crack. "We recently signed an output and co-production deal with Nelvana, which should help us build up contacts in North America. In return, they get better access to Europe."

Because screen-based characters have been hit-and-miss in recent times, Link Licensing managing director Claire Derry believes retailers will "return to core values by marketing products with great features, not just a nice picture on the side." She has recently been appointed to work with Mattel's preschool brand Fisher-Price on its two major lines, Play Families and Bright Expressions. She expects to drive those hard in 2000.

CPL, meanwhile, was recently appointed to handle Mars confectionery brand M&Ms in Europe. Southern expects there to be growth in spin-offs from advertising brands. "This is a much bigger sector in the U.S. and we will look to launch a range of product in a sensible fashion from the summer onwards."

Because of the risks inherent in launching new properties, there is also a growing trend towards revamping classic shows. BBC Worldwide is rejuvenating its 1960s preschool show *Bill & Ben*, while Carlton International will make a great push on cult puppet series *Thunderbirds* in 2000. The show will air fall 2000 on BBC 2, and toy, video and publishing deals have already been signed.

Recent ventures include a Fox/BKN link up in the U.K. on *Monster Rancher* and a Fox/Britt Allcroft Group partnership on *Thomas the Tank Engine* in France.

Although this model doesn't offer the same exposure as a terrestrial deal, there are other benefits, says BAG commercial director Charles Falzon: "Terrestrial is only the answer if you can make assumptions about scheduling and promotion. With Fox Family, we have found a partner that will help us build the brand strategically." The property will be boosted by a June movie release.

Randisi also believes that Europe needs to be originating properties capable of export worldwide. "It is hard to justify developing ideas on a market by market basis. We need to source ideas that can work for the U.S., Europe and Asia." Traditionally, this has been best achieved by the U.S.

He has high hopes for classic Italian property Diabolique, which Fox will push in Europe during 2000 (aided by Giochi). There are also plans to reinvigorate the Princess Sissi property. Further down the line, Randisi expects the arrival of Nascar racing spin-offs to be a prominent feature in the European market.

Everyone knows about KAGOY (Kids Are Getting Older Younger)—but how many in the toy biz are familiar with AAGYO? It's harder to say, but J. Walter Thompson, Chicago group creative director Jeff York is living proof that, indeed, Adults Are Getting Younger Older...

Toy story, too!

BY JEFF YORK

IF I ran the world, a lot of things in kids toy advertising would be very different. For starters, I would ban the following from any girl advertising: The color pink, bubbles, and any precocious little girl breathlessly exclaiming "pretty!" I would pass a law requiring action figures from movies or TV shows to actually look like the actors. Todd McFarlane can do it. Why can't everyone else? You know, I still haven't figured out which one of the *Jurassic Park* figures is supposed to be Jeff Goldblum....

But if there were only one thing I could change in the toy world, I would choose to instruct toy companies to broaden their audience and start targeting adults. It is time for toys to start being sold to all kids. Young and old. And advertised to appropriately. That's right, I'm talking kids in their 20s, 30s and older who never took the advice of First Corinthians and 'put away childish things.' Not just the hard-core collectors, either. I'm talkin' the average Joes out there who are still buying toys.

Who are these people? They are the adults watching Cartoon Network and Nick at Nite. These aren't comic book geeks scooping up the 'misfit toys' either. They are the same folks who helped make both *Toy Story* movies hits for adults as well as kids. These are the people who bought Todd McFarlane's line of *Yellow Submarine* dolls and *Austin Powers* action figures. Dolls and action figures and plush toys are not just kids stuff anymore, and it is high time all toy companies recognized that. And started doing something about it.

What's the first rule of business? Fish where the fish are. That's why everybody and their brother are jumping on the kid and teen bandwagon these days. They are a market with a lot of disposable income and an inclination to buy. Well, that's also true of adults. Adults today are more 'childish' than ever. They gravitate towards nostalgia and the past more than any generation before them. Why? Well folks, it tends to be a rather big, mean and ugly world out there and today's adults need some insulation against it. When you realize that you are the first generation that is not going to live as well as your parents, you need some comfort. That's why you rediscover mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese. (Have you noticed that those two items are showing up on countless restaurant menus across the country?) When you realize that you cannot afford a house the size of the one you grew up in, you are going to try to get as close to that as you can, so you spend hours each week watching reruns of *I Dream of Jeannie*. It beams into your living room like it did when you were a kid, and it almost feels like you never left your parents' family room.



Austin Powers, *Toy Story*'s Woody and Beanie Babies help adults reconnect to the good ol' days

That is why adults are buying more toys than ever before. It's a chance to reconnect with a better time and make the existing one more palatable.

So, marketers, target those adults. Start by running print ads in publications like *Time* or *Newsweek*. Let them know there is relief between the stories on Kosovo and gun control. Blanket the pages of *Entertainment Weekly* and advertise during prime time. Just think how toy commercials aimed at adults would break through the clutter during an episode of *Meet the Press*. (How much ADM does one person need, anyway?) Toy marketers could finally get around all those pesky CARU rules because they wouldn't have to sanitize everything for the kiddies! Hell, isn't *that* reason enough alone to do it?



In my perfect world, every toy has a dual strategy: One for kids, one for adults. I know most adults don't actually play with their toys, but rather use them as objects of art, conversation pieces or office tchotchkes. I have over 50 in my office alone. And that was before I ever worked on any toy account. Still not convinced that there's a big enough adult market? Let me ask you: Can 10 million Beanie Babies possibly be wrong? ●

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Alice Cahn, Group President, Film, Television & Video, ***Children's Television Workshop***
Michael Carrington, Deputy Head of BBC Children's Acquisitions, ***BBC Broadcast***
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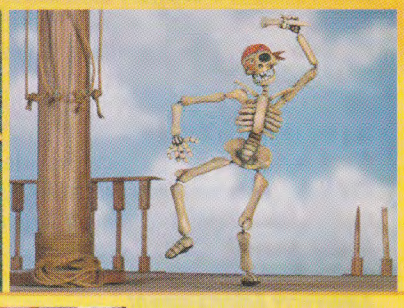














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ADVERTISING TO KIDS

Creative

Effective kid creative demands the right mix of art and science. Too much art gets you brilliant masterworks that have little to do with the product in question. Too much science gets you spots dulled by so many focus groups and research findings that they bore kids to death.

In this, the second installment of our annual three-part series on advertising to kids, we talk to creatives about getting that balance right and other secrets to producing creative that works. Then, in "Multicultural America" (page 86), marketing consultant Bill Imada spills on developing creative that reaches kids belonging to the three largest ethnic groups in the U.S.—groups that, together, control about US$1.5 trillion in spending a year.

Rules for kick-ass kid creative (and when to break them)

BY DUNCAN HOOD

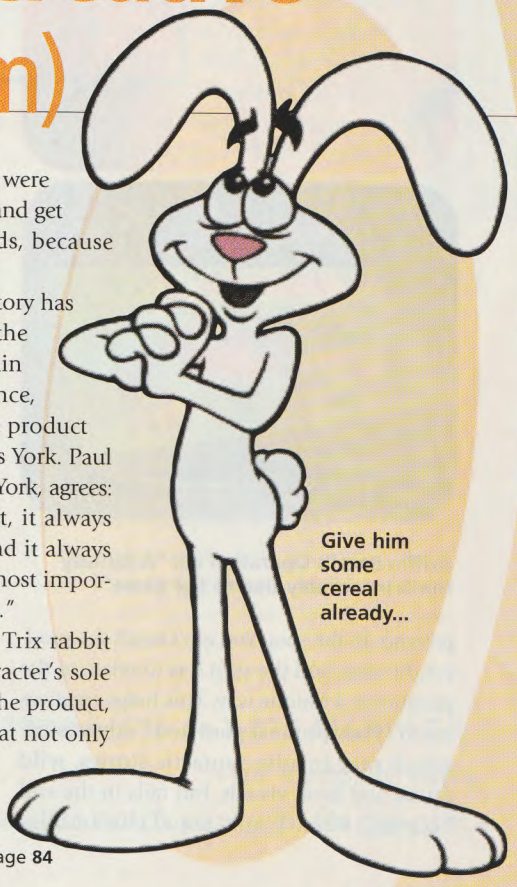
Advertising to kids has come a long way in the last 15 years. Once the domain of low-budget ads showing kids' phony reactions to Wet-n-Whiny Winnie or a bowl of Krispy Crunchies, it is now a major industry that produces some of the most memorable ads on TV. As creative directors have come to better understand their demographic, they have discovered what works and what doesn't when it comes to creative. It's difficult to come up with a list of guidelines for developing effective creative (given that one such guideline would be to avoid formula advertising at any cost), but creatives do allow that there exist some basic principles that are ignored at your peril.

Not surprisingly, developing creative with high entertainment value tops the list. It's an obvious rule, but the trick is putting it into practice. Apart from making use of humor, catchy music and flashy graphics, Jeff York, senior partner and group creative director at J. Walter Thompson, Chicago, says you can't beat a good story. "Kids love stories, they've grown up on them since they were two," he says. "Stories engage the kids and get them to watch for the full 30 seconds, because something is going to happen."

But not just any story will do: The story has to spring straight from the heart of the product in question. "If you can explain the idea for a spot to me in a sentence, and that sentence doesn't include the product in it, then the spot probably fails," says York. Paul Kurnit, president of Griffin Bacal, New York, agrees: "Whatever drama there is in the spot, it always has to revolve around the product, and it always needs to showcase the product at the most important rallying point in the commercial."

Both York and Kurnit point to the Trix rabbit as a classic example. Because the character's sole function in life is to get his hands on the product, the Trix rabbit prompts a story line that not only centers on the product, but helps make the product desirable: The rabbit will do anything for it. The

Creative rules continued on page **84**



Give him some cereal already...

The Trix Rabbit is a registered trademark of General Mills

Creative rules continued from page **83**

story line also helps empower kids (the kids always get the cereal in the end) and adds humor without making the product the butt of the joke (the rabbit is the joke, and he *doesn't* get the cereal).

Kurnit adds that making the product central to the stories is part of a larger guideline that he sees ignored again and again. "The product must be hero," he emphasizes, and that means more than just having a strong



Griffin Bacal's Operation ad: "A fantasy that's inexorably tied to the game"

presence in the spot. You can't mock the product, he says, and the spot has to relate to the product in a unique way. This helps creatives avoid "your product goes here" advertising, which may involve fantastic stories, wild music and great visuals, but fails in the end because it doesn't build brand relationships



Ogilvy & Mather's ad for Cool Blue Barbie: "pretty and pink"

and kids can easily forget what was being advertised. To illustrate, Kurnit points to Griffin Bacal's ads for Hasbro's Operation game. The key to these spots was making the kids into "real" doctors and bringing the patient to life in a humorous way. "There's a fantasy," Kurnit says, "but it's a fantasy that's inexorably tied to the game."

Deyna Vesey, creative director at Kidvertisers, New York, agrees that making sure the ad springs from the product is an obvious rule, but one that is violated all the time. "I've seen commercials that I've thought were great commercials, and then I couldn't remember what it was a commercial for. Sometimes I can't even remember the category—and then you're really in trouble."

Vesey says she learned early in her career how to keep that from happening. "My ex-partner at J. Walter Thompson, Linda Kaplan, came up with this idea of advertising being a velvet glove with a steel fist underneath. The idea is that you feel so good during the whole thing, but you never lose sight of the message." Like York, she uses the "one sentence" technique to ensure she hasn't taken a wrong turn. She says when she first meets with a client, she asks the client to sum up the message the spot should impart to viewers in one sentence, and then "I just go after that like a dog after a bone."

Vesey says that while no creative should ever consider breaking such basic guidelines as making a spot entertaining, respecting kids, being honest, demonstrating ideas rather than describing them, and presenting the "wow" of the product in a clear and direct way, that doesn't mean she advocates formula advertising. "A lot of people—advertising agencies and clients—go for formulas," she says. "That stuff scares me because you become part of a blur and then you become invisible." She says that two categories renowned for such advertising are toys and cereals. While admitting that certain formulas do work, such as the standard reaction shot showing a kid's joy when he or she sinks a battleship, tastes a cereal or hugs a doll, such commercials generally tend to be formulaic, while ignoring the basic rules, and are thus doomed to fail. "It's the caliber of the people working on them," she explains, "it's the budgets, which are limited, and the spots are often produced for Toy Fair, to get retailers."

York agrees: "Those commercials are being done for the buyers instead of for the kids. All they're saying is: Look, I've got all these product points here." He adds that he sees the standard "shoot-em-up" ads for boys and gooey ads for girls as further evidence that toy advertising is behind the curve. "I'm shocked that Barbie commercials are still so pretty and pink," he says. "Christ, you know, couldn't they do something a little more kick-ass for Barbie?"

Kurnit says that advertisers can do better than merely listing features. "The archetypal



CME's "Where's the cream filling?" Hostess campaign: A big risk yields a big success

toy commercial that calls out lots of features and shows a kid playing with a toy will lose more often than it will win. Because it's not a confident commercial. By that, I mean that kids are very savvy about what a product will do, unless it's a totally innovative kind of product that they've never seen before."

Sticking to kid-winning basics while avoiding formulas is a difficult balance to

Creative rules continued on page **88**

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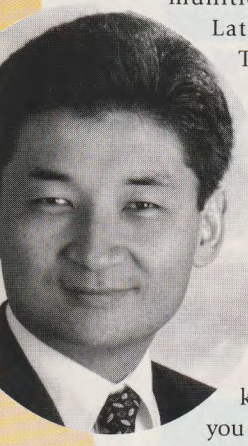
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Effective creative for reaching multicultural America

BY BILL IMADA



North America has been viewed as a melting pot of peoples, cultures, ideas and immigrants from every corner of the planet. But today, the buzzwords are different. Many leading marketers are now saying that the continent is more like a "salad bowl" of sorts. We exist in a society of distinct cultures, each with a truly unique world. Every individual and family that is personified in this bowl touches and shapes the lives of people around them. This is why North America can be a marketer's dream or its worst nightmare.

In the U.S., the three largest ethnic communities are Asian Pacific-Americans, Latinos and African-Americans. Together, they have a combined purchasing power that exceeds US$1.5 trillion per annum. And collectively, they represent better opportunities for increasing revenue than other North American market segments.

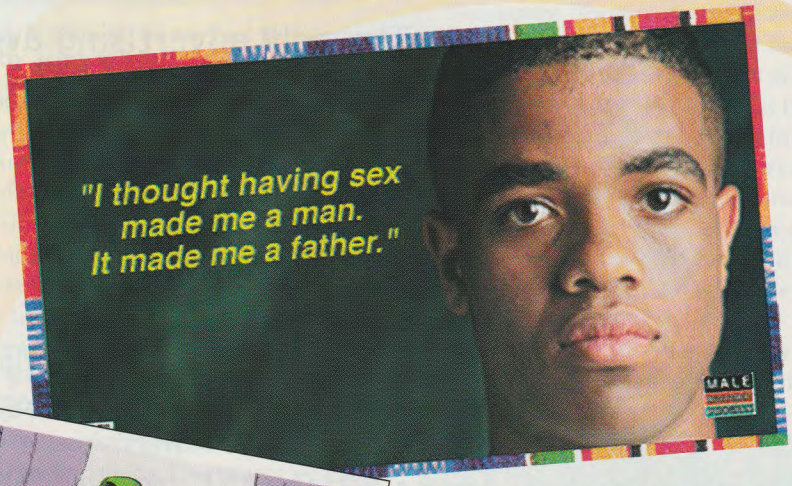
While savvy media buys in community publications and on niche TV networks such as BET can help marketers reach such communities, you can't make the sale without creative that rings true with cultural groups. Pulling this off can be a tough task for creatives used to aiming for white, middle-class Americans, but taking a little time to meet ethnic communities on their own turf can go a long way.

This was evident in a campaign we worked on for a pizza company that wanted to market its products to Asians. In focus group sessions, many recent Asian immigrants said they didn't care for the taste of pizza. They disliked the smelly cheeses, processed meats and chewy crusts that other Americans love about pizza. The only way these Asian consumers would try pizza was when their children complained that they were tired of Asian foods. "Asian parents want to please their children," notes my associate, Robert Park, senior VP of Imada Wong. "They will literally do anything to ensure that their children have everything that America has to offer, including fast food. And once they try pizza, they discover that it's quite delicious." He adds that Asian kids acculturate faster than their parents do and are willing to try new things.

The response garnered just by advertising in an ethnic group's language and using actors from that community is amazing, but to be truly successful, the creative has to reflect both the cultural traditions immigrants import from their homelands and kids' desire to fit in and immerse themselves in mainstream American culture.

For instance, several years ago, a marketer wishing to reflect the home life of Japanese kids might have shown the kids eating in silence, with the father at the head of the table and the mother in the kitchen. Today, showing a more informal, chatty family with everyone taking part in the conversation would be more effective. The former spot might more accurately portray the home life of traditional Japanese families, but taking Japanese actors and producing a more "American-style" scenario would be more compelling because it shows what Japanese-American kids *want* meals to be like.

Fortunately for advertisers not wanting to produce a dozen different spots to reach different segments of the market, "American style" has been influenced so much by the African-American and Hispanic cultures that on certain fronts, such as music and fashion, such cultures *are* the mainstream. Most kids, including children from ethnic communities, are heavily influenced by urban, hip-hop





Lagrant Communications reflects the target in an ad promoting personal responsibility to teens (above), while using rap to promote birth control to urban African-Americans ages 12 to 19 (left)



LoMcXimo.com, a Web site featuring the biographies of important Hispanics, is a key part of the Points of Pride Hispanic campaign launched by McDonald's in the U.S. last month

culture. African-Americans have succeeded in capturing the attention of youth all over North America, leading the charts in many areas of entertainment. You clearly see it in the clothes they wear, in the music they consume, and in the television programs they watch. Such blending of cultures has reached the point where a creative choosing music for an ad directed at Asian kids would have more success with rap than music from Japan.

"African-Americans are hot, hip, cool, fashionable and funky," says Kim L. Hunter, president of Lagrant Communications, a firm that promotes the African-American market to corporations and governmental agencies. "Kids want to be all of that. That's why I'm always amazed that no matter where I travel, whether it is to Seattle, Washington, D.C., or Los Angeles, African-American kids truly have had a visible impact on American culture."

African-Americans aren't the only ones having an impact on the youth scene. Hispanic influence, particularly in major cities such as New York, Miami and Los Angeles, is also growing among today's kids. Ricky Martin and Marc Anthony, both former members of the popular 80s band Menudo, have become teen idols almost overnight, while Jennifer Lopez and Christina Aguilera are household names all across the continent with kids and teenagers. According to Rebecca Loehr, director of SLAM Youth Marketing in New York, a division of BSMG Worldwide, Latin music will remain hot in the new millennium.

"It's accurate to say that Latin artists like Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez are completely hot with teens across the board," says Loehr. "When you look at their music, it's actually a blend of Latin inspiration and pop rock. The news media dubbed Latin music the heat wave in 1999, and we'll see that continue this year." This blend of Hispanic, African-American and Asian influences are important considerations for all marketers to consider when targeting kids and teens.

Ray Durazo, president of Durazo Communications, an L.A.-based Hispanic marketing communications firm, is quick to offer prospective marketers advice about reaching ethnic kids—particularly Hispanics. "When marketing to Hispanic kids, it's necessary to acknowledge their ethnicity without making it the exclusive premise of your marketing message," advises Durazo. "This can be done by simply using Hispanic images or by sprinkling Spanish or English-Spanish terms into the marketing message." Durazo used a recent ad created by soft drink marketer Mountain Dew to illustrate his point. According to Durazo, the ad's announcer suggests that their youthful consumers "Toma this" (literally "drink this") in commercials targeting Hispanic kids. Durazo believes that this blend of languages is a clear indication that some marketers recognize that kids are bicultural and accept messages that are diverse in nature.

Mercedes Cubas, director of public relations at Siboney USA, a leading Hispanic marketing communications firm, says that because of this biculturalism, marketers can reach Hispanic kids through English-language as well as Spanish-language television programming that targets them. "Hispanic children are heavily exposed to general market television, even though they live in two worlds, one world at a time," offers Cubas. She asserts that many Hispanic kids reside in the "outside world" part of the time and in the "inside world" the other part of the time. In essence, these kids serve as "vehicles" that bring the outside influences into Hispanic households, exposing parents, grandparents and other siblings to the latest trends and ideas. "But it doesn't stop there," says Cubas. "Hispanic kids are also impacted at their very core by the cultural and familial values that are transmitted to them by their parents, grandparents and extended family."

Like Asian and African-American parents, Hispanic parents don't always understand the latest and greatest fads in entertainment, but they all have one important thing in common: A keen interest in providing the best things for their kids. For immigrant parents, this need to provide for the well being of their children is even more acute. Cubas reflects on the *Pokémon* game and trading card phenomenon that is the latest craze among kids and teenagers. "Hispanic parents don't understand or relate to the latest craze in toys and entertainment, but they feel proud that their kids are able to do what other kids are doing," notes Cubas.

Blending cultural fragments is an effective way to reach kids of all cultures, but SLAM's Rebecca Loehr warns marketers not to lump kids together as if they're all the same. "All kids do not process information in the same way," says Loehr. "Many outside factors, including where they live and who they hang out with, contribute to what kids decide to emulate and which trends they decide to adopt."

Creatives have to understand that the members of the Latino community in Miami, for instance, have a strong local culture and speak and dress differently than Latinos in other parts of the U.S. Similarly, African-Americans in Los Angeles have a very different cultural experience than those in Atlanta. Lumping all the members of a diverse cultural group together can backfire, as one marketer that used the word "nieve" in an ad directed at Hispanics discovered: While Mexicans correctly interpreted the word as "ice cream"—to Cubans the word means "snow" or "ice."

Bill Imada is the president and chief executive officer of Imada Wong Communications Group in Los Angeles.

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pull off, but all creatives say that they've had the most success when they took risks and ignored conventions. Campbell Mithun Esty chief creative officer John Hurst says his biggest risk was also his biggest success: The "Where's the cream filling?" Hostess campaign. "It would have been very easy to do fairly traditional advertising for that," he says. "The way we served it up, without talking about the features was fairly risky. Not showing the product until the last few seconds of the spot was risky. We broke a lot of rules governing what packaged goods companies normally do."

Vesey says her greatest risk was shooting a spot completely in red for a line of Playskool Electronics branded merchandise produced by KIDdesigns a few years ago. She isn't sure whether it paid off or not, as she says the client didn't come through with funding for a proper media buy, but says the white product stood out nicely and the spot was the highlight of her agency's reel for years. "A certain amount of risk is, I believe, responsible," she says. "You are giving a party with somebody else's dough, but if you don't try to be great, you will never be great."



Recently launched Kidvertisers campaign "Nickelodeon Nation" delivers empowerment and fun through a catchy anthem and charismatic kids just being themselves

Innovation and risk-taking mark the new kids advertising, say the creatives, as well as showing how the genre has progressed over the years. Hurst says that other advances include the possibility of presenting more fantastic images (thanks to advances in computer animation and editing techniques), more sophisticated humor for more sophisticated kids, and new media outlets, such as the Web, for new types of creative. York adds that he has seen production budgets increase from less than US$100,000 per 30-second spot to top out at over US$250,000 for CGI-heavy ads. Kurnit disagrees, saying he hasn't seen an increase in production budgets, but shares optimism that kids advertising is getting more sophisticated and has higher production values because marketers are taking the kids demo more seriously than they used to.

"I think that will be a continued renaissance in kids advertising," concludes Hurst. "And I think that as some of the more traditional marketers see the possibilities of what they can do, some of the old walls will continue to be torn down."

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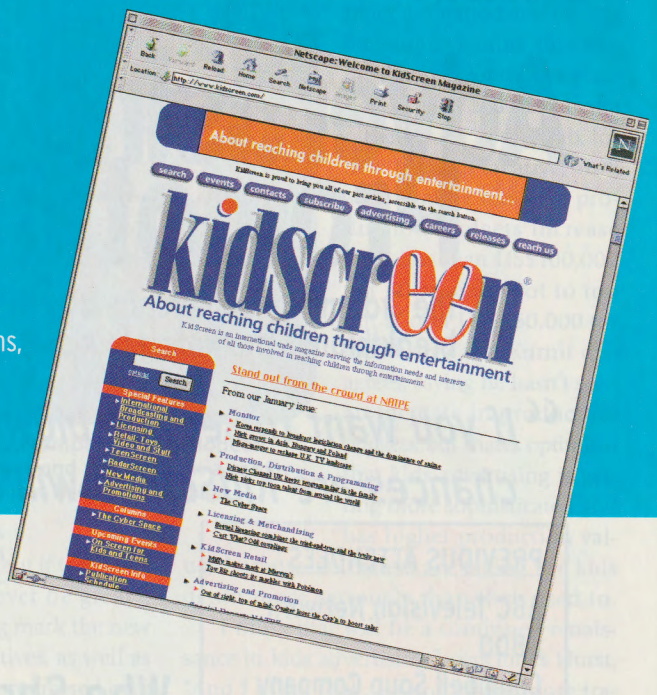
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radarscreen

Squishy toys for *Chicken Run*

BY JO ANNE KENNY

AS the June 23 debut of Aardman Animations/DreamWorks co-pro *Chicken Run* draws nearer, DreamWorks is looking to a merchandising strategy that takes licensee integration to new levels and captures the essence of the film right down to the texture of the toys.

Key elements in the integration include not only asking licensees to agree to on-pack promos pushing product from fellow licensees, but asking them to produce toys designed to work with other such products. For instance, Playmates will produce *Chicken Run* figures sporting on-pack promos for the Art Caddy (being produced by Flying Colors), and Flying Colors will, in turn, push the figures on its Art Caddy packaging. As well, "the figures are built in scale with the Art Caddy, which doubles as the Flying Machine vehicle, so a child can play with both items together," says Travis Rutherford, head of licensing at DreamWorks.

Chicken Run's inventory of licensees already counts out at over 50 and covers off all major categories. The flick, a comedy/adventure about a group of chickens making a desperate bid for freedom, looks to target the broad family demo with licensed product targeting kids and older family members of both genders.

Achieving an authentic 3-D look for merchandise, reflective of the clay-animated characters in the movie, is a big priority. Licensees such as Toronto-based Spin Master Toys plan to accomplish this by making figures and other toys out of a flexible, silicone-based material. "We're looking to catch the feel of the clay characters by not using basic, hard plastic," says Rutherford. All product hits retail around the end of May, and toys will focus largely on the play patterns of flight and escape.

Rutherford says that in an effort to maintain product consistency globally, DreamWorks Consumer Products has restructured its toy distribution outlets: "Instead of having two different licensees in two different territories making the same product, we will have one manufacturing resource and two distribution outlets. It's bringing the price point down, and it's going to bring product to the U.S. market that's never been seen before."

Chicken Run is the first of five clay-animation movies that DreamWorks will create with U.K.-based Aardman in the hopes of building an ongoing, long-term franchise. *The Tortoise and the Hare*, based on the Aesop fable, will be the next feature released as part of the deal.



***Chicken Run* toys designed to fly the coop**

Rugrats promo cranks sequel buzz

Nickelodeon and seven of its *Rugrats* licensing partners are teaming up for an early April sweepstakes promotion to tout the Thanksgiving 2000 theatrical release of *Rugrats in Paris*. The campaign will be supported for a two-week period on Nickelodeon channels around the world, on nick.com, in *Nickelodeon Magazine* and through entry forms appearing on product packaging. The first prize winner will be awarded two trips to Los Angeles: One to record the voice spot, and a second to attend the film's premiere.

"This is almost a sneak-peek, and a way of letting our kids become aware of it before it is totally out of the bag—kind of a tease about the upcoming movie," says Leigh Anne Brodsky, senior VP, Nickelodeon consumer products.

Rugrats in Paris product will hit retail in early February and will reflect the new richer, more dimensional look that the characters developed after the first movie. According to Brodsky, new product will reflect themes that may not necessarily stem directly from the film. "We are going more fashion-oriented with what we are doing with Angelica, we are incorporating some sports themes, and things which you may not even see on the show—but which are important in a kid's life," she says.

Participating licensees include Simon & Schuster, Mattel Media, Pagoda/Buster Brown Shoes, SWAT/Fame, Giant Merchandising, Flying Colors and Freeze. The new merch will serve as prizes for the sweeps. **JAK**

Toy Fair reveals shadowy X-Men

X-Men fans need not wait until the July 2000 bow of the comic-spawned flick to get their fix: They can get a glimpse of the characters via the new toy line from Toy Biz debuting at February's New York Toy Fair.

Product to be showcased includes action figures sculpted in the likenesses of the actors in the movie, a video game and *X-Men* vehicles.

The figures, geared to kids ages four and up, will initially be released in June 2000, with a second set of figures released in conjunction with the *X-Men* television series, which debuts later in the year. The figures have a SRP of US$5.99.

For gamers, there is *X-Men* Grip Tech, a three-dimensional video game that comes with two figures and controllers to make the figures punch, kick and grunt. A power meter on the figures changes color depending on how much strength they have in reserve, and when their power is depleted, they are ejected. Grip Tech streets June 2000 with a US$49.99 SRP for kids ages four and up. Vehicles include the *X-Men* Motorcycle and the *X-Men* X-Jet, both of which hit shelves in June with a target demo of four and older. The motorcycle has a US$12.99 SRP, while the jet will sell for US$24.99. **JAK**

Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Story Line (A: animation, CA: computer animation, L: live action, CGI: computer-generated images)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotion Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners	Visibility-Boosting Additional Media
Final Destination							
Teens	March 17, 2000	(L) Teen thriller about a metaphysical character of death who is never seen, but returns to reclaim the lives of a group of teens saved from a plane crash.	New Line Cinema/Zide-Perry Films/Hard Eight Pictures	Dave Imhoff, executive VP of worldwide licensing and merchandising, New Line Cinema, 212-649-4944	Mary Goss Robino, VP of national promotions, New Line Cinema, 310-967-6585		
The Road to El Dorado							
Family	March 31, 2000	(A) Set in the year 1519, the film recounts the comic misadventures of a pair of roguish small-time con artists who inadvertently stow away to the New World.	DreamWorks Feature Animation	Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000	Holly Beverly, promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000	**licensees:** Penguin Putnam (publishing), Landoll (publishing)	DW Records will release soundtrack
Whatever it Takes							
Teens & adults	March 31, 2000	(L) A high school-based romantic comedy about a popular jock and a social outcast who help each other seduce the respective girls of their dreams.	Sony Pictures Entertainment	Anita Frazier, VP of sales, Sony Pictures Consumer Products, 310-244-6897	Columbia Pictures Global Promotions, 310-244-5456	**promo partner:** Levi's	
The Nutty Professor II							
Kids, teens & family	First quarter, 2000	(L) A return of Eddie Murphy's hefty hero Sherman Klump, this time joined by Janet Jackson.	Universal Pictures/ Imagine Entertainment		Beth Goss, senior VP of national promotions, Universal Pictures, 818-777-1697		
Snow Day							
Kids & family	First quarter, 2000	(L) Chevy Chase plays a dad whose family goes haywire when school is canceled due to heavy snow.	Paramount Pictures/ Nickelodeon Movies	Holly Rawlinson, VP of domestic licensing, Viacom Consumer Products, 323-956-5531	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	**licensee:** Simon & Schuster	
I Know What You Screamed Last Summer							
Teens	First quarter, 2000	(L) It's *Friday the 13th* and *Halloween* on the same day in this teen horror spoof about the misadventures of a costumed psychopath terrorizing the popular kids at Bulimia Falls High School. Features Tom Arnold and a VJ sleuth played by Tiffani-Amber Thiessen.	Rhino Films	Steve Nemeth, head of production, Rhino Films, 310-441-6557	Steve Nemeth, head of production, Rhino Films, 310-441-6557		
Ready to Rumble							
Family	April 14, 2000	(L) Nick movies director Brian Robbins directs this pic about two enthusiastic young male wrestling fans who watch their idol suffer what appears to be a humiliating defeat. In a series of hilarious mishaps, they manage to revive his career.	Warner Bros./Outlaw Productions/Bel Air Entertainment	Karen McTier, senior VP, North American sales, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7980	Tyler Turquand, senior promotions rep, Warner Bros., 818-954-6167		
Mr. Accident							
Teens & family	April 21, 2000	(L) Love amid the chaos of a world hurtling into a new millennium is explored in this slapstick feature starring Yahoo Serious.	G2 Films, MGM	Lisa Westfield Avent, VP of domestic licensing, MGM Consumer Products, 310-449-3286	Randy Smith, VP of national promotions, MGM/United Artists, 310-449-3444	**licensees:** Fossil, Nicole Miller, Chupa Chups, Winterland, American Greetings, Norcom	

The Flintstones in Viva Rock Vegas

Family	May 12, 2000	(L) Everyone's favorite stone-age family in the city of sin. Flashbacks take the audience back to Fred and Wilma's early courtship days.	Universal Pictures/ Amblin Entertainment	Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic licensing and retail, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin Wright, senior VP of worldwide promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	**licensees:** Bakery Craft, Anagram International, Scorpio Posters, Bazumba Toys, Power Photo Kiosks, Starlight Designs **promo partner:** QSR on-board	

Monkey Bone

Males (16 to 35)	May, 2000	(L/Stop-frame A) A cartoonist played by Brendan Frasier enters a fantasy world after going into a coma. Also stars Bridget Fonda, Whoopi Goldberg and Dave Foley.	Twentieth Century Fox	Jennifer Robinson, VP of domestic sales and licensing, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3243	Katie Chin, senior VP of worldwide promotions, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3199		

Dinosaur

Kids & family	May, 2000	(CGI) An ultrarealistic dinosaur living in the Cretaceous era gets separated from its family as an egg and is raised by a group of lemur monkeys.	Walt Disney Pictures	John Singh, communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	**licensee:** Mattel (Master toy)	Really long killer trailer in theaters

Chicken Run

Family	June 23, 2000	(Clay A) A comedy-adventure about a group of chickens making a desperate bid for freedom, voiced by Mel Gibson, Julia Sawaha and Miranda Richardson.	Aardman Animations/Allied Filmmakers/ DreamWorks Feature Animation	Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-733-7000	Anne Globe, head of promotions and marketing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-695-6681	**licensees:** Playmates (master toy), Tiger Electronics, Milton Bradley, Parker Brothers, Colorbok, Jem Sportswear, PCA Apparel, ACI International, Fruit of the Loom, Worldwide Dreams, Disguise, Zak Designs, Decopack, American Greetings, Pyramid, Sandylion, Landoll and Penguin (publishing) **promo partner:** QSR on-board	

Center Stage

Kids, teens & youth (eight to 21)	Second quarter, 2000	(L) Drama à la *Fame* following a tightly knit group of young dance students trying to make a name for themselves in the fiercely competitive world of professional dance.	Sony Pictures Entertainment	Anita Frazier, VP of sales, Sony Pictures Consumer Products, 310-244-6897	Columbia Pictures Global Promotions, 310-244-5456		

X-Men

Males (16 to 35)	July, 2000	(L) All over the planet, unusual children are born with a genetic "X-factor" that allows them to fly, perform telekinetics and shoot laser beams from their eyes. Professor Charles Xavier (Patrick Stewart) trains the children to use their powers, calling them his X-men.	Twentieth Century Fox	Jennifer Robinson, VP of domestic sales and licensing, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-4202	Katie Chin, senior VP of worldwide promotions, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3199	**licensees:** Toy Biz, Topps (trading cards)	

The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle

Family	July, 2000	(L/CGI) Jay Ward's animated moose and squirrel characters reunite to stop the live-action evil Fearless Leader, played by Robert DeNiro, and his cohorts Boris and Natasha (Jason Alexander and Rene Russo).	Universal Pictures/ Tribeca Productions	Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic licensing and retail, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin Wright, senior VP of worldwide promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	**licensees:** over 65, including Mary Meyer Corp., Just Toys, Briefly Stated, FAB, Fruit of The Loom, StarBound Entertainment, Trendmasters, Disguise, Changes, Landau, Alexander Doll, PCA Apparel, Stanley De Santis, Franklin Mint, Basic Fun, Cooperstown Bears, Creative Expressions, Toy Network, Western Graphics, Bantam Books, Simon & Schuster	Houghton Mifflin Interactive (computer software), Media Station (animated CD-ROM)

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Title & Primary Target Audience	Release Date	Story Line (A: animation, CA: computer animation, L: live action, CGI: computer-generated images)	Studio & Distributor	Licensing Contact	Promotion Contact	Licensees & Promotional Partners	Visibility-Boosting Additional Media
Thomas and the Magic Railroad							
Family	July, 2000	(A/L) A *Thomas and Friends* adventure comes to the movies, featuring the gang's antics on the Island of Sodor.	Gullane Pictures, Destination Films	David Jacobs, VP/group head of U.S. licensing, The Britt Allcroft Company, 212-463-9623	Rachel Cadden, VP of national promotions, Destination Films, 310-434-2752	**licensees:** Learning Curve, Random House, Erytl, All Wrapped Up, Lionel Trains **promo partner:** Subway is tying in for a kids meal promo	
The Recess Movie (working title)							
Family	August 4, 2000	(A) The school year is finally over, and T.J. Detweiler is looking forward to a fun-filled summer—until he uncovers a scheme to do away with summer vacation. T.J. and friends join forces to save the season.	Walt Disney Pictures	John Singh, communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of national promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151		
TEEN **Shaft Returns**							
Teens & adults	Summer, 2000	(L) The original had a great theme song, and now detective John Shaft takes on the New York of 2000. Starring Busta Ryhmes, Samuel L. Jackson and Vanessa Williams.	Paramount Pictures	Holly Rawlinson, VP of domestic licensing, Viacom Consumer Products, 323-956-5531	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377		
Pokémon Movie II (working title)							
Kids	Summer, 2000	(A) The continuing saga of Ash Ketchum and his pocket monster friends plays out in the second installment of the franchise phenom that is Pokémon.	4Kids Entertainment/ Shogakukan Productions, Warner Bros. (dist)	Carlin West, VP of marketing and communications, Leisure Concepts International, 212-758-7666	Carlin West, VP of marketing and communications, Leisure Concepts International, 212-758-7666	**licensees:** Hasbro (master toy), Basic Fun, Trends International Corp., Golden Books, Alphi International **promo partner**: Burger King is tying in for a kids meal promo	Kids' WB! will promote
Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas							
Kids (two to 11) & family	Thanksgiving, 2000	(L) Ron Howard directs Jim Carrey in Dr. Seuss' delightful holiday fantasy.	Universal Pictures, Imagine Entertainment	Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic licensing and retail, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin Wright, senior VP of worldwide promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	**licensees:** Over 15, including Playmates (master toy), Imaginings 3, American Greetings, Decopac, Creative Expressions, Nancy Sales Co., Hot Properties, Publications International, Random House (publishing) and DS-Max	Games from Universal Interactive, soundtrack from Universal Music
TEEN **Charlie's Angels**							
Teens & adults	Fourth quarter, 2000	(L) A smart, sexy update of the '70s TV show revolving around three female detectives: Natalie (Cameron Diaz) the bookworm, Dylan (Drew Barrymore) the tough girl and Alex (Lucy Liu) the class act.	Sony Pictures Entertainment	Anita Frazier, VP of sales, Sony Pictures Consumer Products, 310-244-6897	Columbia Pictures Global Promotions, 310-244-5456		
The Magic Pudding							
Kids (five and up) & family	Fourth quarter, 2000	(A) John Cleese stars in this animated comedy based on the children's book of the same name.	Energee Entertainment/Icon Entertainment/ 20th Century Fox	Lim Mi-Kyoung, Gaffney International Licensing, 61-3-9933-8600	Adrian Vander Kraan, Energee Entertainment, 61-2-9420-8864	**licensee:** Scholastic	
The Rugrats in Paris							
Family	Holiday, 2000	(A) This *Rugrats Movie* sequel finds Tommy, Chuckie, Angelica and the rest of the babies in an adventure overseas.	Nickelodeon Movies/Paramount Pictures	Leigh Anne Brodsky, senior VP, consumer products, Nickelodeon, 212-258-7500	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	**licensees:** Over 100, including Mattel (master toy), AME Apparel, Simon & Schuster, Oral B, Colorbok, Farley's, American Greetings, Tiger Electronics, Stuart Hall, Happy Kids, Freeze, Springs, Kid's Headquarters, Giant, Sara Lee Knit Products and Landoll	Paramount Home Video, The Learning Company (software) and THQ (software)

102 Dalmatians

Family	Holiday, 2000	(L) A live-action version of the spotted-dog favorite.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)	John Singh, communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of nat'l promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	

Monsters, Inc.

Family	Holiday, 2000	(CA) Chaos breaks loose after a hapless monster accidentally lets a human child into his secret world.	Walt Disney Pictures/Pixar, Buena Vista (dist.)	John Singh, communications, Walt Disney Consumer Products, 818-560-5151	Cherise McVicar, VP of nat'l promotions, Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, 818-560-5151	

Jumanji 2

Kids & teens	Holiday, 2000	(L/CGI) The Jumanji game is fished out of the ocean and eventually lands at The White House. When the first family plays Jumanji, the president is sucked into the game and freak animals wreak havoc in Washington.	Columbia Pictures/ Sony Pictures Imageworks	Anita Frazier, VP of sales, Sony Pictures Consumer Products, 310-244-6897	Columbia Pictures Global Promotions, 310-244-5456	

Here On Earth

Teens	2000	(L) A wealthy prep student and a small-town girl fall in love. When the girl discovers she is terminally ill, the boy must make a choice between his heart and the future that his father has chosen for him. Starring Leelee Sobieski, Chris Klein and Michael Rooker.	Twentieth Century Fox	Jennifer Robinson, VP of domestic sales and licensing, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-4202	Katie Chin, senior VP of worldwide promotions, 20th Century Fox Licensing & Merchandising, 310-369-3199	

Tomb Raiders: The Movie

Teens & adults	2000	(L) Bodacious video game heroine Lara Croft jumps to the big screen and adventurous questing ensues.	Eidos Interactive, Paramount Pictures	Holly Rawlinson, VP of domestic licensing, Viacom Consumer Products, 323-956-5531	Lisa DiMarzio, senior VP of worldwide marketing partnerships, Paramount Pictures, 323-956-5377	**licensees:** Playmates (master toy), Toy Biz

The Adventures of Tom Thumb and Thumbelina

Family	2000	(A) The classic story comes to animated life with Jennifer Love Hewitt voicing Thumbelina and Elijah Wood as Tom Thumb.	Miramax Films/ Hyperion Studios	Lori Sale, senior VP, worldwide promotion, Miramax, 323-769-4137	Lori Sale, senior VP, worldwide promotion, Miramax, 323-769-4137	

Munchies

Teens & adults	2000	(L) A black comedy about three anorexic valley girls turned into cannibalistic zombies by an experimental diet pill and their subsequent rescue by the school geek.	MGM/United Artists/Davis Entertainment, MGM Distribution Co.	Lisa Westfield Avent, VP of domestic licensing, MGM Consumer Products, 310-449-3286	Randy Smith, VP of national promotions, MGM/United Artists, 310-449-3444	

Osmosis Jones

Young adult & family	Spring, 2001	(A) Adventure/comedy set in the living body of a construction worker named Frank Detomello, referred to as the City of Frank. A white blood cell named Osmosis Jones, voiced by Chris Rock, teams up with a rookie cold tablet (David Hyde Pierce) to defend their host body against an evil virus.	Warner Bros.	Karen McTier, senior VP, North American sales, Warner Bros. Consumer Products, 818-954-7980	Tyler Turquand, senior promotions rep, Warner Bros., 818-954-6167	Thirteen animated episodes on Kids' WB!, Warner Home Video release

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Gulliver's Travels							
Family	Summer, 2001	(L/3-D A) The first in a series of three 100% computer animated, large-format, stereoscopic films being produced by Mainframe Entertainment for exhibition at IMAX theaters.	Max/Frame	J.A. Roth & Associates, 310-453-5005	Salemo & Associates, 310-247-1109		
Final Fantasy: The Movie							
Kids, teens & adults	Summer, 2001	(CGI) A futuristic action-adventure about life, love and humanity, complete with cutting-edge computer-generated humans, aliens and environments. Featuring the voices of Alec Baldwin, Steve Buscemi, Ving Rhames, Donald Sutherland and James Woods.	Square Pictures/ Columbia Pictures	Grace McNamee, manager of public relations, Square Pictures, 310-315-0671	Columbia Pictures Global Promotions, 310-244-5456		
Shrek							
Family	Holiday, 2001	(CGI) A "fractured fairy tale" based on the William Steig children's book about an ugly ogre, voiced by Mike Myers, looking for a place in the world and someone to share it with.	DreamWorks Feature Animation/Pacific Data Images	Travis Rutherford, head of licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-695-9771	Anne Globe, head of promotions and marketing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-695-6681		
The Pink Panther							
Teens & family	2001	(L) Inspector Clouseau's search for the stolen Pink Panther diamond takes him into the world of international fashion and the Middle East to combat a greedy sultan.	MGM/United Artists, Orion Pictures, MGM Distribution Co.	Lisa Westfield Avent, VP of domestic licensing, MGM Consumer Products, 310-449-3286	Randy Smith, VP of national promotions, MGM/United Artists, 310-449-3444	**licensees:** Fossil, Nicole Miller, Chupa Chups, Winterland, American Greetings, Norcom	
The Mummy II (working title)							
Teens & adults	2001	(L/CGI) The action-adventure sequel to the *The Mummy* continues the saga of the treasure-seeking explorers in the Sahara.	Universal Pictures	Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic licensing and retail, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987	Lisa Berlin Wright, senior VP of worldwide promotions, Universal Consumer Products, 818-777-2987		
Untitled CGI Monster Project (working title)							
Teens & family	2001	(CGI) A revived monster's comeback, enhanced by digital effects.	Universal Pictures/ Industrial Light & Magic	Tim Rothwell, senior VP of domestic licensing and retail, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-9001	Lisa Berlin Wright, senior VP of worldwide promotions, Universal Studios Consumer Products, 818-777-2987		
Spirit							
Family	2001	(A) In America's untamed west in the mid-1800's, a wild mustang struggles for survival and freedom.	DreamWorks Feature Animation	Travis Rutherford, licensing, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-695-9771	Holly Beverly, promotions, DreamWorks Consumer Products, 818-695-9972		

Films in Pre-production

Hoofbeats

Family	Second quarter, 2000	(L) A period piece about a young foal adopted by an orphaned stable boy in an African mining town.	Columbia Pictures/Davis Entertainment

Titan A.E.

Males (16 to 35)	Summer, 2000	(A/CGI) Fox Animation's sci-fi epic about a 19-year-old boy who saves the Earth after an alien attack. Featuring the voices of Matt Damon and Drew Barrymore.	20th Century Fox

Robots of Mars

Family	Summer, 2000	(A) A screwball comedy set 2,000 years in the future. Three wacky robots thwart the world-conquering schemes of the evil supervisor of Mars (voiced by Tim Curry).	Midland Productions

Astro Boy

Kids & teens	Holiday, 2000	(L/CGI) Astro Boy, a robot boy built by a scientist to resemble his dead son, comes to the big screen after living in a Japanese cartoon since 1963.	Columbia Pictures/Jim Henson Pictures

Road Trip

Teens & adults	2000	(L) *Animal House* creator Ivan Reitman returns to the college pic genre with the story of four students making a thousand-mile trek to another college.	Montecito Picture Company/Dream-Works Pictures

How to Eat Fried Worms

Kids	2000	(L) Based on the book by Thomas Rockwell, this is a coming-of-age comedy about a young boy whose family moves to the U.S. earthworm capital. He ends up chowing some down to try to fit in.	Nickelodeon Movies/Imagine Entertainment

The Snow Queen

Family	2000	(L) Two childhood friends are separated when one is taken hostage by the mysterious Snow Queen.	BBC Worldwide/ BBC Films/ Eclectic Media

Spy Kids

Kids & family	Second quarter, 2001	(L) The world's greatest spies are missing and only two people can save them: Their kids. Directed by *El Mariachi* director Robert Rodriguez.	Miramax/ Dimension Films

Pocket Monster: The Lord of the Unknown Tower (Pokémon Movie III)

Kids	Summer, 2001	(A) The third feature installment of the Pokémon trilogy.	4Kids Entertainment/ Shogakukan Productions/ Warner Bros. (dist)

Lord of the Rings (first in trilogy)

Kids, teens & adults	Holiday, 2001	(L/CGI) The first of an effects-packed, three-part adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's seminal classic book series *The Lord of the Rings*.	New Line Cinema/ Weta Digital/ WingNut Films

Kingdom in the Sun

Family	2001	(A) Loosely based on the classic story *The Prince and the Pauper*. David Spade voices an Inca prince who discovers his double, who is a farmer.	Walt Disney Pictures, Buena Vista (dist.)

Films in Development

Aardman Animations	Wallace & Gromit feature film (A)
Belokan Productions/Canal Plus	The Sun Warrior (A)
Cinar	Who Gets the House? (L)
Columbia Pictures	Toy Box (co-production with Centropolis) • Darkminds (A, co-production with Chris Lee Productions/Dreamwave Productions) • Dr. Strange: Master of the Mystic Arts (L, co-production with Angry Films)
Davis Entertainment	Pippin (A, co-production with Sky Productions)
DreamWorks Pictures	Tusker (CA) • The Cat in the Hat (L/CGI) • H.G. Wells' The Time Machine (L) • Eddie Klep (L, co-production with Apostle Films) • Planet Fred (L)
Film Roman	Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers (A)
Fox Family Films/Storyopolis	Red Ranger Came Calling (L/CA)
IMAX	R.L. Stine's The Beast (L/3-D large format)
ITE	Hugo and the Diamond Moon (A)
Lucasfilm	Untitled Star Wars movie (second prequel) (L/CGI)
Medialab/Ciné-Groupe	Pinocchio 3001 (CA) • Sphinx@Com (CA)
MGM	Another sequel to 2001: A Space Odyssey (L) •The Extreme Adventures of Super Dave (L)
MTV Films	Celebrity Deathmatch (A) • Spy Girl (L) • Biting Temptations (L) • Alice (L) • Party Over Here (L)
New Line Cinema	Lord of the Rings trilogy, parts two and three (L/CGI) • Gigantic (L) • Freddy vs. Jason (L) • Burger Wuss (L)
Nickelodeon Movies	Bone (A) • Prometheus and Bob (L) • Rube Goldberg project (L) • Hey Arnold! feature (A) • Alien Pet Boy (A)
Rhino Films	Slushy (L)
Scholastic	Goosebumps (L, co-production with Fox) • The Golden Compass (L) • Stellaluna (A)
Silver Pictures/Sweetpea Entertainment/ J&M Entertainment	Dungeons and Dragons (L)
Sony Pictures Entertainment	Spider-Man movie (L, co-production with Marvel) • Providence (L)
Spooky House Productions	Spooky House (L)
Touchstone Pictures	Witchwars (L)
Twentieth Century Fox	Sinbad: Beyond the Veil of Mists (A) • Dracula (A) • Fenwick's Suit (L)
Universal Pictures	Curious George (A) • Jurassic Park III (L) • Sprockets (L)
Walt Disney Pictures	Treasure Planet (A) • Carmen Sandiego (L) • Who Framed Roger Rabbit? prequel (L/A) • Atlantis (A)
Warner Bros.	Barbarella (L) • untitled Bugs Bunny project (A) • untitled Superman project (A) • Summer Catch (L, co-production with Marquee Tollin/Robbins) • Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (L, co-production with Brillstein-Grey)* • See Spot Run (L)* • Pet People (L)* • The Incredible Mr. Limpet (L) *titles not confirmed by Warner Bros.

People in new jobs

BBC Worldwide (New York, New York, 212-705-9300): **Julius Cain** has been promoted to VP of co-productions and sales where he will be responsible for the licensing and syndication of BBC TV programs to public broadcasters State-side. Cain will also handle distribution to other U.S. markets. He was most recently director of BBC sales.

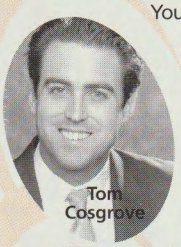
The Copyright Promotions Licensing Group (London, England, 44-171-580-7431): Leaving a non-event related licensing position at ISL Licensing, **Roland H. Schmidt** joins the CPLG team as head of the company's sports division, and **Chris Protheroe** has been upped to head of football. As such, Protheroe will be responsible for developing a licensing campaign for the 2002 FIFA World Cup.


Chris Rago

Davidson Marketing (Chicago, Illinois, 312-527-3900): **Chris Rago** has been promoted from senior entertainment marketing specialist to director of entertainment marketing.

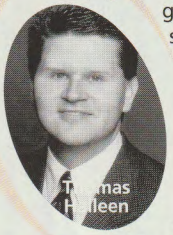
Forefront Entertainment (Vancouver, Canada, 604-682-7910): **Marilyn Kynaston** has been upped from sales exec to director of international sales, and **Erin Haskett** moves up from coordinator of sales and acquisitions to sales exec.

Fox Interactive (Los Angeles, California, 310-369-3900): **Karly Young** has come on-board as director of brand marketing. Prior to the move, Young was a marketing executive for PC game developer NovaLogic.


Tom Cosgrove

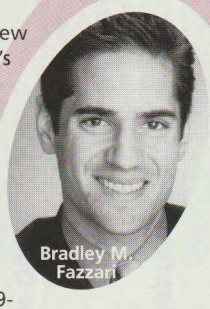
Fox Family Channel (Los Angeles, California, 310-235-5100): **Tom Cosgrove** has been upped to senior VP of planning, scheduling and program operations at Fox Family Channels and Fox Kids Network. Cosgrove was most recently VP of planning, scheduling and station relations. **Thomas Halleen** has also been promoted from director of programming to VP of prime-time acquisitions and scheduling for Fox Family Channels. **Jill Goldfarb** has been upped to VP of planning and scheduling for Fox Family Channels from a post in that department.


Jill Goldfarb


Thomas Halleen

Hasbro Properties Group (Los Angeles, California, 310-274-3601): **Carol Monroe** has been promoted to VP, Visual Media Group and is charged with opening HPG's new L.A. office this month. The new location will coordinate creative development, production and licensing efforts for Hasbro's growing entertainment biz. Monroe has been with HPG for six months, serving as a producer for the fantasy factory team. Prior to coming aboard, she was senior VP of programming and development at Fox Kids Network.

itsy bitsy Entertainment Company (New York, New York, 212-989-3660): Coming off a brief stint as Mattel's senior product manager responsible for the Barbie accessory business, **Bradley M. Fazzari** joins as senior licensing manager of itsy bitsy's off-screen entertainment. With the move, Fazzari will trade in pink camper vans for Tubby toast as he takes on the duty of supervising the development and production of toys, videos, books and apparel based on TV-based properties like *Teletubbies*, *Noddy* and *Eloise*.


Bradley M. Fazzari

Just Group (Bakewell, Derbyshire, England, 44-1629-814-994): **Nick Underwood** has joined Just's Derbyshire office as international marketing manager. Underwood previously spent three years plugging the Teletubbies as international marketing manager for Ragdoll Productions.

Mattel (El Segundo, California, 310-252-2000): Mining its competition, Mattel has found a new president for its interactive toys and software division. Ex-Sega COO **Bernard Stolar** will be charged with leading Mattel Interactive out of an end-of-year slump largely attributed to the US$105-million Q3 '99 loss incurred by The Learning Company, which Mattel acquired in May '99. Stolar orchestrated the launch of Sega's Dreamcast system, which reached first-day sales of US$97 million last September.

MTV Networks (New York, New York, 212-258-8000): Operating out of the New York office, **Lisa Hackett** has been named VP of international programming operations for MTV Networks, London. Hackett previously filled the VP of rights and clearances post in MTV Networks' Law and Business Affairs department.

Nickelodeon Magazine (New York, New York, 212-258-7500): **Jeff Dunetz** has been named associate publisher of Nick's mags, which include *Nickelodeon Magazine*, *Rugrats Comic Adventures* and *GAS Magazine*.

PBS (Alexandria, Virginia, 703-739-5000): **Jinny Goldstein** has joined as senior VP of education from The Business Channel, where she served as president and CEO.

Lego Media International snaps into TV production

Kids programming vet Bob Thompson took over the new position of character and story development manager at London-based Lego Media International in December.

Thompson heads up the new production arm of the company and is on the lookout for toon acquisitions, co-pros and ideas for developing in-house series that jibe with the Lego ethos. "It's important to put the child at the center of what we're doing," Thompson says. "The focus is going to be on strong characters and series, and they won't necessarily revolve around Lego toys. What's important is that we demonstrate that we want to make quality, serious TV," he says. Lego is planning to have an animated slate ready in about 18 months.


Bob Thompson

Thompson says the company will be looking at toons targeting a broad range of ages. There is no set percentage breakdown of the amount of resources that will go to in-house projects versus acquisitions. "We will be project-led. If one year, all the good projects are in-house, that's fine."

Lego will also be developing character and story bibles for other mediums. Thompson says he is working with Lego's game division, as well as with the publishing team on upcoming projects.

Thompson was most recently commercial manager of children's education and animation at the BBC Rights Agency, "the opposite of Theresa Plummer-Andrews, if you like," he jokes. Thompson held the position for two years and was with the BBC for six. He also lectures at Pilots, an EEC-funded project geared to new producers and writers. **KB**

Universal Pictures (London, England, 44-171-307-7513): **Loredana Cunti** will manage the acquisition and production of kids programs as senior VP of Universal Pictures Visual Programming. Prior to the appointment, Cunti served as VP of sales of children's programs for Universal International Television. **Loredana.Cunti@unistudios.com**

Walt Disney Studios (Burbank, California, 818-560-8000): **Peter Schneider** takes over as chairman from departing **Joe Roth**, who resigned last month after five and a half years at the helm. Schneider has been a Disney exec for 15 years.

Warner Bros. International Television Distribution (London, England, 44-207-984-5400): **Joshua Berger** has been promoted from VP of licensing and business development to senior VP of international sales and business development and managing director, Europe.

Fox Kids Europe focuses on regional programming and grabbing girl viewers in 2000

BY KATE BARKER

Benoit Runel took the reins as executive director of programming and acquisition for all 30 Fox Kids channels in Europe early last month. Runel is pumping a substantial chunk of the budget into acquisitions targeting the six to 11 set and plans to expand the net's girl-targeted block into new regions.

"In order to be competitive, we want to infuse channels with freshness and modern programming," Runel says. The percentage of the budget earmarked for acquisitions depends on the region, according to Runel, but ranges between 20% and 60%. "On a pan-European basis, we'll buy 100 to 200 episodes."

Fox Kids Europe considers regional differences and treats each country separately, rather than applying a general brush-stroke policy across all markets, and each country also acquires its own programming. Runel, for example, is looking for more 11-minute series for the U.K. to balance out the number of 26-minute shows airing in that region. In Holland, regional productions like the live-action *Sinter Klass* helped to boost the channel's market share this year. "It's a very weird and funny show," Runel says, "and it's performing almost as well as *Pokémon*."

The channel will also start to export other regional-based successes, like its girl-targeted Boys Forbidden block, which began in Holland and France in 1998. The one- to one-and-a-half-hour block, comprised of three to four half hours of programming, airs girl toons like *Princess Sissi*, *Happiness* and the recently acquired *Stella and Jewel Riders*. "Mattel and Lego are specifically requesting to be on the Boys Forbidden block," Runel says, adding that he plans to expand the block into all Fox Kids Europe regions this year.



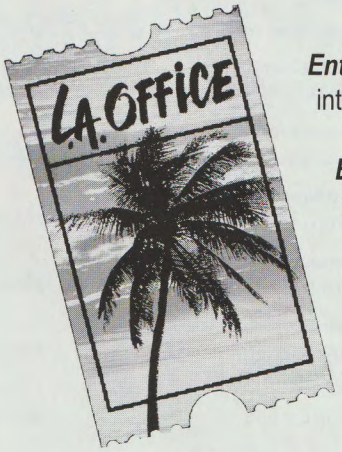
Benoit Runel

Fox Kids Europe currently reaches 16 million households in Europe. It took a 24.2% market share average on the CanalSatellite platform in France for ages four to 10, where it rated as the number one channel. It ranks behind Teletoon in France nationally as the number two kids channel and in Holland, its market share jumped from 16% to 22% this year.

Runel moves into this new position from his previous post as deputy general manager and programming director at Fox Kids France, where he was instrumental in the channel launch. Prior to that, he worked for three years at France's TF1, where he oversaw acquisitions in the children's department. ●

Please send your people news (including the person's photo and e-mail address) to Kate Barker at *KidScreen*, People in New Jobs, 366 Adelaide St. West, Suite 500, Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5V 1R9; fax: 416-408-0870; e-mail: kbarker@brunico.com.

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Britt Allcroft Group
New York, New York 212-463-9623

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CBC
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Cinar Films
Montreal, Canada 514-843-7070

Ciné-Groupe
Montreal, Canada 514-524-7567

Children's Television Workshop
New York, New York 212-595-3456

Copyright Promotions Licensing Group
London, England 44-171-580-7431

DIC Entertainment
Burbank, California 818-955-5400

Discovery Communications
Bethesda, Maryland 301-986-1999

Disney Publishing
New York, New York 212-633-5905

DK Ink
New York, New York 212-213-4800

DreamWorks Consumer Products
Glendale, California 818-695-3200

DreamWorks SKG
Universal City, California 818-733-7000

DSI Toys
Houston, Texas 713-365-9900

Eden Toys
New York, New York 212-947-4400

Eurpsville U.S.A.
Port Washington, New York 516-883-8306

Fox Kids Europe
London, England 44-171-554-9000

Fox Kids Network
Los Angeles, California 310-235-9600

FUNimation Productions
Fort Worth, Texas 817-788-0627

Golden Books
New York, New York 212-547-6700

Granada Television
Manchester, England 44-161-832-7211

Griffin Bacal
New York, New York 212-415-2900

Hasbro
Pawtucket, Rhode Island 401-431-8697

Imada Wong Communications Group
Los Angeles, California 213-622-6513

Interactive Television Entertainment
Copenhagen, Denmark 45-33-26-5600

Irwin Toy
Toronto, Canada 416-533-3521

J. Walter Thompson
Chicago, Illinois 312-951-4000

The Jim Henson Company
New York, New York 212-794-2400

Kidvertisers
New York, New York 212-966-2345

Lough House
Isle of Man, England 44-162-481-7151

Lucasfilm
San Rafael, California 415-662-1800

MGA Entertainment
North Hills, California 818-894-2525

Manley Toy Quest
Los Angeles, California 310-277-7855

Mattel
El Segundo, California 310-252-3507

McFarlane Toys
Tempe, Arizona 480-491-7070

Microsoft
Redmond, Washington 425-882-8080

Nelvana
Toronto, Canada 416-588-5571

Nickelodeon
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Nickelodeon Consumer Products
New York, New York 212-258-8000

Nickelodeon Movies
Los Angeles, California 310-752-8000

NPD Group
Port Washington, New York 516-625-0700

Noggin
New York, New York 212-846-6121

Play•By•Play Toys and Novelties
San Antonio, Texas 210-829-4666

Play Co. Toys
San Marcos, California 760-471-4505

PPM Multimedia
Madrid, Spain 34-91-859-1913

Playmates Toys
Costa Mesa, California 714-428-2000

Random House Children's Publishing
New York, New York 212-751-2600

Ravensburger Film + TV
Ravensburg, Germany 49-75-186-1692

Rumpus Toys
New York, New York 212-463-9869

Saban Entertainment
Los Angeles, California 310-235-5100

Saban International
Paris, France 33-1-41-19-7030

Scholastic Productions
New York, New York 212-343-7500

Snubelgrass Interactive
New York, New York 212-843-8022

Sony Signatures
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Sony Wonder
Santa Monica, California 310-449-2100

Spin Master Toys
Toronto, Ontario 416-364-6002

Spunky Productions
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Boulogne, France 33-1-41-41-1234

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Toy Biz
New York, New York 212-588-5100

Toy Craze
Cleveland, Ohio 216-595-0807

Toys 'R' Us
Paramus, New Jersey 210-265-7800

Tiger Electronics
Vernon Hills, Illinois 847-913-8100

Trendmasters
St. Louis, Missouri 314-231-2250

United Media
New York, New York 212-293-8500

Universal Studios
Universal City, California 818-777-1000

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Burbank, California 818-954-7890

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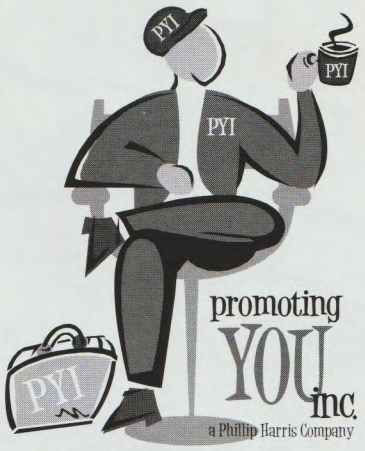
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Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Location	Phone	E-mail/Web	Industry
Nuremburg Toy Fair	Feb. 3-8	Nuremburg, Germany	49-911-998130	—	Toys/Games
Supershow	Feb. 10-13	Atlanta, GA	305-893-8771	supershow@aol.com	Sports
American International Toy Fair	Feb. 13-17	New York, NY	212-675-1141	info@toy-tma.com	Toys/Games
Magic International—Fall/Winter	Feb. 14-17	Las Vegas, NV	818-593-5000	www.magiconline.com	Apparel
MILIA	Feb. 14-18	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.milia.com	Inter/MM
Monte Carlo Television Market	Feb. 20-23	Monte Carlo, Monaco	201-869-4022 (U.S.)	vitcomusa@aol.com	TV
Latino Youth Power	Feb. 23-24	Miami, FL	800-882-8684	www.kidpowerx.com	Marketing
American Film Market	Feb. 24-Mar. 3	Santa Monica, CA	310-446-1000	www.afma.com	Film
NARM Conv. (Nat'l Assoc. Recording Merchandisers)	Feb. 27-Mar.1	San Antonio, TX	609-596-2221	www.narm.com	Merch/MM
Brussels Cartoon & Animated Film Fest	Feb. 28-Mar.10	Brussels, Belgium	32-2-534-4125	folioscope@skynet.be	Film/Anim
OnScreen for Kids and Teens Conference	Mar. 1-2	Los Angeles, CA	416-408-2300 (Canada)	dmacneil@brunico.com	TV/Film
ASIFA-Hollywood Animation Expo	Mar. 3-4	Glendale, CA	818-842-8330	www.asifa.com	Animation
The Game Developers Conference	Mar. 8-12	San Jose, CA	415-905-2388	www.gdconf.com	Inter/MM
eTeen Power	Mar.14-15	New Orleans, LA	800-882-8684	www.kidpowerx.com	Marketing
Dallas Super Market/Toy Show	Mar. 18-21	Dallas, TX	214-655-6100	www.dallasmarketcenter.com	Toys/Games
PROMAX & BDA Europe	Mar. 20-21	Berlin, Germany	310-788-7600 (U.S.)	www.promax.org	TV/Promo/MM
Sportel America	Mar. 20-23	Miami Beach, FL	201-869-4022	vitcom@usa.com	Prod/Dist
Braincamp	Mar. 23-24	New York, NY	516-791-0809	www.braincamp.com	Lic/Mktg
Cartoon Movie	Mar. 23-26	Potsdam, Germany	32-2-245-1200	www.cartoon-media.be	Anim/Film
Online Toys 2000	Mar. 29-30	New Orleans, LA	800-882-8684	www.kidpowerx.com	Marketing
Bologna Children's Book Fair	Mar. 29-April 1	Bologna, Germany	39-51-282-361	www.trade-fairs.com	Publishing
Parents World & Kids World Expo	April 1-2	Arlington Heights, IL	847-520-7962	www.parentsworldkidsworld.com	Mktg/Inter/Toys
MIP-TV	April 10-14	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
Cartoons on the Bay 2000	April 14-18	Positano, Italy	39-06-3749-8315	www.raitrade.rai.it	Animation
COMDEX Spring	April 25-28	Chicago, IL	781-449-6600	www.comdex.com	Toys/Games/Elect
Cable 2000 (National Cable Television Assoc.)	May 7-10	New Orleans, LA	202-775-3669	www.ncta.com	TV/Prod
Kid Power 2000	May 7-10	Orlando, FL	800-882-8684	www.kidpower2000.com	Marketing
Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3)	May 11-13	Los Angeles, CA	800-315-1133	www.e3expo.com	Toys/Games/Elect
Summit 2000: Children, Youth and the Media	May 13-17	Toronto, Canada	416-515-0466	www.summit2000.net	Prod/TV/MM/Vid
World Education Market	May 24-27	Vancouver, Canada	33-1-41-90-4423 (France)	www.wemex.com	Education
Prix Jeunesse International	May 31-June 6	Munich, Germany	49-89-5900-2058	www.prixjeunesse.de	TV
Annecy International Animated Film Festival	June 5-10	Annecy, France	33-4-50-10-0900	www.annecy.org	Anim/TV/Film
Nashville Independent Film Festival	June 7-11	Nashville, TN	615-742-2500	www.nashvillefilmfestival.com	Film
Banff Television Festival	June 11-17	Banff, Canada	403-678-9260	www.banfftvfest.com	TV
Licensing 2000 International	June 13-15	New York, NY	203-882-1300	www.licensingshow.com	Lic/Merch
PROMAX & BDA Conference & Exposition	June 14-17	New Orleans, LA	310-788-7600	www.promax.org	TV/Promo/MM
Agora	June 23-26	Cyprus, Greece	357-277-5596	www.options.com.cy	TV
VSDA Convention	July 8-10	Las Vegas, NV	800-331-5706	www.vsdaconvention.com	Video
Comic Book Expo	July 18-19	San Diego, CA	619-544-9555	www.comic-con.org	Publishing
Magic International—Spring/Summer	Aug. 28-31	Las Vegas, NV	818-593-5000	www.magiconline.com	Apparel
National Merchandise Show	Sept. 10-13	New York, NY	800-950-1314	www.merchandise-show.com	Licensing
Golden Marble Awards	Sept.13-14	New York, NY	877-627-2537	www.goldenmarble.com	Ad/Promo
East Coast Video Show	Sept. 26-28	Atlantic City, NJ	800-331-5706	www.ecvshow.com	Video
MIPCOM Jr.	Sept. 30-Oct. 1	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
MIPCOM	Oct. 2-6	Cannes, France	33-1-41-90-4400	www.mipcom.com	Prod/Dist
Brand and Licensing Marketing 2000	Oct. 25-26	London, England	44-181-948-5522	—	Lic/Mktg/Ret
Sportel Monaco	Nov. 5-8	Monte Carlo, Monaco	37-79-330-2032	www.sportel.org	Prod/Dist
London Programme Market	Nov. 6-8	London, England	44-181-948-5522	www.lpmarket.co.uk	TV
COMDEX Fall	Nov. 13-17	Chicago, IL	617-449-6600	www.comdex.com	Multimedia
School & Home Office Products Ass'n (SHOPA) Show	Nov. 15-18	Miami Beach, FL	937-297-2262	www.shopa.org	Licensing

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